

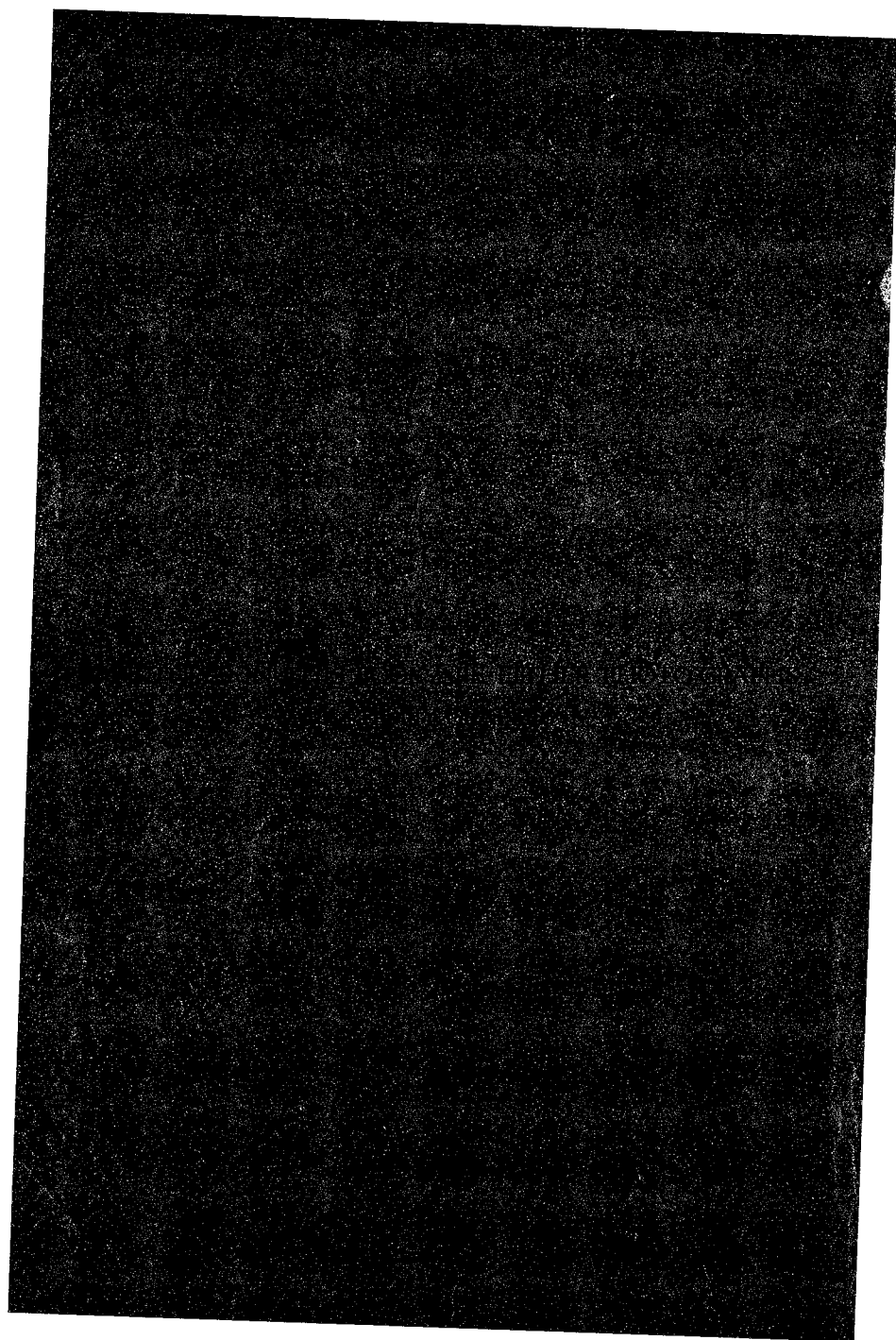
A TRUE STORY  
**THE HOMESTEADER**



**From the Pulpit to the Plow  
10 years in Western Canada**



Written by  
**Bernard Shubert**  
Franklin, New York  
**1945**

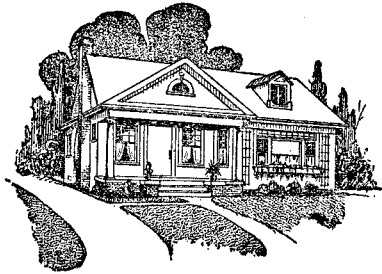


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## THE HOMESTEADER

A Home is the simplest and greatest institution on earth. Whether you find it in a gypsy wagon or in a palace, it makes no difference. Home in its perfection is a picture of heaven. We all long and hope for it.

A minister of the Methodist Church enjoys a lot of privileges, but his family more or less misses the full joy of home, because they never know where they will have their home next year. Yet the desire for an abiding home is there just the same. Every minister has way back in his mind the wish and hope sometime to own and live in his own home, even if it would be only for a few years after retirement.



WE DREAMED OF A HOME OF OUR OWN

This was our case exactly. Our silent hope found fulfillment far sooner than expected. Working among the German people we found ourselves working at a dying cause. The young people in our churches married into the English churches faster than we liked it. Our old people died and our churches became empty. The first 30 years of my life had been spent in Germany. Over here I found it just about impossible to master the English language and felt, that I never could serve an English church with satisfaction. Our salary at the best had never been above \$600 a year. What did the future promise under these circumstances? We had never worked for the money part of it, but without churches and without money it was impossible to go on. We had loved our work with all our heart, we had given it the best part of our life, we had never asked or looked for ease or reward, but now we felt we had to give it up and choose another way. All this caused us a tremendous lot of heartsearching and heartburning.

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We had always felt a strong secret desire to work on the land, and this lead we followed in this emergency. We decided to homestead.

(After we had made this decision we sometimes felt like we had done wrong, so we were greatly encouraged when some of our colleagues who were still in the work or in retirement, wrote: "We admire you for the decision you have taken, and for the grit and perseverance you have shown in the execution of your plans and we are pleased to see the success you have achieved. We wish we had had it in us to follow you.")

That was in February 1909. As I write this it is 1932. After I had finished this story I laid it in a shoebox with the idea to publish it at some convenient time. Now it is 1944 and I have dug the story up again. I will print it in my annual chick-catalog. Our chicks are selling without much ado and can be satisfied with a cover and a price-list. Future generations of my folks will be glad to know not only that Father and Mother Shubert came to this country from Germany in 1902 but also how they met the questions of life when they were pioneers on the virgin prairie of western Canada.

Now before I describe our experiences in homesteading I want to answer the query: "Would you do it again?" Emphatically I say: "NO." I would advise every young man not to go out in a faraway wilderness to start a home. It would be far easier, cheaper, and better to buy a fair farm right here in N. Y. Building up a homestead costs a lot of money, work, and heartaches. The worst are the uncertainties of climate and crops. In 10 years we had hardly three good crops in Canada. Drouth, rust, and hail dashed our hopes to nothing the rest of the time. While there we expected to have only one payday a year, but often the payday came only after two or three years. In the meantime debts piled up and brought us to the verge of despair.



DEBTS BROUGHT US TO THE VERGE OF DESPAIR

Here in N. Y. you can have a payday every month. If you know the chicken-business you can have a payday twice a week and oftener.

Here in N. Y. you have good roads. By day or night, almost 365 days a year you can go any place. In Canada we had no roads at all, just trails. In the winter we were often cut off from the outside world for days and weeks. The social and church life was conspicuous by its absence most of the time. It was not living, only existing.

### *How It Became Possible*

How in the world did it become possible that we should homestead in far off western Canada? With the sleeping hope in our heart sometime maybe to retire to a home of our own I had bought a 160 acre farm for \$500 in Arkansas. Now all our thoughts went that way. Yet we did not go south but rather north. How did that happen?

Mr. Stark, a member of my last church in Kansas, did not know when he was well off. He wanted a change. So he made a long trip thru two countries, the States and Canada. He went as far as northern Alberta. When he came back, he reported, that he intended to buy a farm near Camrose, not far from Edmonton, at that time the last jumping-off-place to the north pole.

When I called on Mr. Stark, soon after his return, he showed me some literature about western Canada, printed by the government. He also told me how to homestead, or how to get land with soldiers-scrip. These scrip were a bonus from the Canadian government to their soldiers after the first World War. These papers could be sold until they were outlawed at a certain date. At that time they were bought for about \$500 and each gave the holder the right to homestead 160 acres in addition to his personal right to homestead 160 acres. That way a man could buy two scrips for 320 acres. Then he could take a homestead of 160 acres free and beside take a preemption of 160 acres for \$3 per acre. Altogether 640 acres, a piece of land one mile square. His duties were to live 6 months a year for 3 years on these lands and plow 10 acres a year on each. Later on I saw little houses with 4 rooms that had been built in the center, where the four 160 acres joined together. The people changed their bedroom every 6 months and fulfilled their duties perfectly.

Of course, such a scheme took some ready cash, which I did not have. I considered all these possibilities and finally decided on one thing first: not to go to Arkansas, but to Canada. Why? Because Arkansas meant much work behind the hoe. It meant handwork, or at best work with one mule, while in Canada most everything was done with a four-horse-team. The prospect of reward seemed far brighter here.

The next question was: where to get the money necessary for the start Mr. Stark wanted me to go along with him, so I said to him: "If you will borrow me \$500 I will go along with you." He said: "Yes," and that settled it.

When I got told around, that the Starks were ready to sell out and go to Canada, they sold their farm overnight. Next came the big auction. where they sold all their chattels at good prices. I also sold a few things I wanted to get rid of. We owned one of the most beautiful horses I had ever seen. We called it the Kicker-Lady. It, or she, would work double, but when I tried to break her in, single, she kicked a buggy to pieces. My diary tells me, that I traded her that day for a large black horse and paid \$75 to boot. The horse was 14 years old and died before the year was over. I bought another big black mare for \$65. When she had a balky spell nothing could move her, as you will hear later. I felt glad, because now I had a nice big team to do my future work. I also bought a seed drill for \$14. On a private dicker I got a mower, rake, and plow, all for \$50.

*Monday, March 1, 1909*

In talking over all these plans with Mrs. Shubert, I found her heart and soul with me. While she had been raised a little on the soft side of life, in a parsonage, she enjoyed excellent health and had an adventurous spirit. As a young girl she went to London, England, and worked as a governess. When I decided to cross the ocean and meet the new world she was with me 100 per cent. When we went homesteading she never held back. And when things went from bad to worse, and it got darker and darker, she never flinched. She was real pioneer stuff. And now in 1944 after 40 years of every up and mostly down possible, we finally landed on easy street, but my health is broken. I am just making the motions of work, but the hon. Missus is still going strong to keep things going and me too.



HERE IN NEW YORK WE GOT ON TOP OF THE WORLD

The above was not in the original script but something told me that I should give my better half some credit for the wonderful help she has been to me and all our family.

Well, in 1909 we wisely decided, that I should first go alone to Canada with the Starks and pick out the future home, and then come back and get the family. So on Monday, March 1, 1909, the Missus and the kids said Good-by to me and the Starks on the little Santa Fe depot in Sylvia, Kansas.

We came to Kansas City first. Here we secured a homeseekers excursion ticket for half price. Then we hunted up the Immigration Agent of Canada. He settled a very important question for me. So far I had had a very hazy idea of going with Mr. Stark to Alberta and buy a little farm near him. But how to do that on \$500 I had never figured out. Suffice it to say, I felt, that I was lead by an unseen hand and I trusted everything would come out allright. And it did.

The Canadian agent had a big map of western Canada on the wall of his office. Here he showed us a stretch of country south of Moose-Jaw in Saskatchewan. A railroad was surveyed and here it was, where homesteads were taken up rapidly. That appealed to me, for it cut my trip almost in half. Beside, it meant that I would be from 500 to 1000 miles closer to the eastern markets, where my grain would have to be sold. It meant a better price for all the things I had to buy, as these came mostly from the east.

Mr. Stark felt favorably towards a homestead himself, but Mrs. Stark put her foot down and said: "No!" She would not live 50 miles from nowhere! They went on to Alberta, but after a year or two they did not like it anymore and went back to Kansas, while one of the boys took over the farm in Alberta. He had also been given the claim on me for the \$500. After some time he was hard up for money, so he offered me a good discount if I would pay him up. With the help of a good friend I secured the money and made him glad. That was the last I heard from the Starks.

I have got ahead of my story again. We were last in Kansas city. From here to St. Paul we homeseekers had a private car. Here I got acquainted with Dan Booi and his family. He was a giant in figure and speech. He came from Kinsley, Kansas, a little west from our last home in Sylvia, Kansas. Then there was Mr. Bell and his boys from Missouri. There were a few others, but we lost them out of sight later, but these two families I may mention again.

#### *Arriving In Moose-Jaw, Canada*

When we arrived in Moose-Jaw I told them, that I had heard of an immigration hall, where we could stay free of charge. Anything "free" looked very good to my slender purse. We inquired for that place and finally found it in a back alley. It looked like an old barn that had been changed over for this purpose. We were shown a big room with a big stove and were told we could do our own cooking. Upstairs were some sleeping quarters, but it did not look good to my friends, so we all went to the Brunswick hotel, where we found good meals and good beds for good money.

That night everybody said: "Let's go to a show," and off they went. I did not feel in the mood and kept close to home in the lobby of the hotel. I spoke to a few men and tried to gather some information. After awhile I heard some music outside and in came a Salvation Army lassie tom-tomming her little drum and passing it around for a collection. I put in my contribution with the silent prayer: "Lord bless me and guide me with thy unseen hand, so I may find the right place of a home for my family."



### *Mr. Stark Finds Mr. Goebel*

When we arrived in Moose-Jaw Mr. Stark had to change trains and had to wait several hours. Looking around he heard a German voice and was soon acquainted with Mr. Goebel. This man lived in Moose-Jaw, he kept a little boarding house and probably was at the depot fishing for customers. He told Mr. Stark, that he had two sons homesteading 50 miles south, and that there was more land open where the boys had located, and that they would be only too glad to give us a helping hand.

Now Mr. Stark came post-haste into the city looking for me. After he had found me, we set out to find this man Goebel. When Mr. Stark left on the next train he knew we were in good hands and on our way.

Mr. Goebel took us to the landoffice and learned us are ropes. He told us where his sons were located. Then we asked the agent to give each of us our allotted two township plots, with those 160 acres taken marked off. When each of us 5 men had two different plots we had quite a territory to pick from. Now we had to go out and see the land, as it was against the law to file on any land sight unseen. When we did file, we had to kiss the book as an oath, that we had seen the land.

### *Hunting a Homestead*

After we had settled our destination, the next question was, how to get there. This homestead business had brought a big boom to Moose-Jaw. It seems everybody there was living off us. The hotels and boarding houses took the first crack at us, then came the guides, that took a cut for locating us. Next came the livery stables, where our teams were taken care of. Then the groceries, the hardware and the lumberyards. Then the implement dealer, the department stores, the theatres and saloons, the lawyers, the doctors and the dentists. The feed dealers and the grain elevators also did a thriving business.

We agreed with Mr. Roach to take us out and show us the country. We had to pay him \$10 each. He had to furnish the transportation and we had to pay all the expenses for him and the team. As we did not know what was ahead in the expected wilderness we wanted to be prepared. We went to a grocery store and bought these supplies. I found the list in my diary.

Bacon .....	\$2.25
Herring .....	.35
Cheese .....	.60
Jam .....	.75
Bread .....	3.00
Soda Crackers .....	.35
Ginger Snaps .....	.25
Pickles .....	.25
Apples .....	.50
Tea, 2 lb. ....	.80
Milk, 2 cans .....	.30
.....	
	\$9.40

We waited all morning for our man Roach. He did not show up 'til afternoon, claimed he had waited at the wrong hotel. Yes, this was the time when cars and trucks were just being invented. Our man came for us with a real solid lumber wagon. He had three spring seats for the comfort of the driver and the five passengers. We rumbled out of town, glad to be going for the adventure and towards our future home.

The first 12 miles were very level land and no snow. Every bit was occupied by prosperous farmers. Would we ever be like them? Then we entered the hills with 4 - 12 inches of snow, and nobody living there. Everybody was grabbing nice level land. But in later years every bit of this rolling and hilly land was also taken. The soil was excellent, so why not?

Soon it got dark in the hills. The road became a trail and was hard to find under the snow. Our driver stopped and looked around to orient himself. He seemed to be lost. We had a tent along, but tenting in the snow was the last thing we wanted to do. Finally we saw a small flickering light far off. It was Bebbits ranch and stopping-place. Very glad and very humbly we knocked at the door of the small house. Yes, there was room for six men.

The old motherly Mrs. Bebbits gave us a fair supper. Then we sat around the little stove trying to keep warm and talking. To my surprise I saw a bible laying handy. As my friends knew I was a minister, I thought I might just as well act like one. I took the bible, read a part and said a word of prayer. Then we went upstairs and slept right under the roof.

Next day we drove out into the hills in a snowstorm. We came to Lake Johnston, the next stopping place. After dinner we borrowed a sleigh and explored the northern shore of the Lake of the Rivers. We found some land we liked, but having no plats and unable to find corner stakes, we turned back to the stopping place. We had seen the Goebels shacks on the other side of the lake, and were ready to go there the first thing in the morning.

### *The Goebel Homestead*

After a fair night at the "Lake Hotel" we hit right out after breakfast with high hopes soon to see the "promised land." We found the Goebel's shack alright, but nobody at home. That would badly spoil our plans, so we set to work to find clues. There was a small stable, buried under a haystack, probably for warmth and handiness. Cautiously we opened the door and looked in. Two oxen stood deep in dirt, and a small horse invited us to count its ribs. Sure, here was a clue, somebody must be around. Then we peeped into the shack. An exceedingly dirty mattress lay on the floor. A hound dog with some puppies guarded it with a growl. The other room was a dark storeroom for coal and other junk.

It was near noon. We were cold and hungry, so we sought shelter in the lee of the haystack, opened our supplies and made the best of it. The bread was frozen, and a hot drink we just imagined.

Then we looked for more clues. We found tracks. They led to a dugout a couple miles away. There we found two homesteaders and our man Karl Goebel. They were playing cards and killing time. We were immensely glad to have found somebody to talk to. We asked Karl where we could stay over night. He said, "you can stay in my shack but I have nothing to eat." Well, we had plenty, so this worry was settled. On the way back Karl showed us a few corner-stakes, so we got an idea of the lay of the land.

When we got home we really cleaned house. We carried everything outside. We found some forks and knives and gave them their first cleaning since they were new. Our driver was elected cook. The lignite coal was awfully poor stuff. It took him a very long time to get us a hot cup of tea. We made the most of it, hunger is the best cook.

Now we went to the haystack and brought in big armfulls of hay. We made our beds on the floor, which was 10 by 12. We slept like sardines in a box.

Next morning after breakfast we scattered in all directions to explore the promised land and take our pick. I went out alone south, one or two miles. I got on top of a hill to see what was beyond. There was a valley and another long hill. I went there, hoping to see an endless prairie, but it was just another valley and another hill. Then I gave up. It was near noon, and I went to see how the others had made out.



IT WAS JUST ANOTHER VALLEY AND ANOTHER HILL

Yes, they were all waiting for me. Each had made his pick, but me. I had seen a half section the day before that appealed to me, but Mr. Bell wanted it for his son, so they could be neighbors, and I had consented to it. Now, what was going to happen to me? Should I act hardboiled and grab this land before the other could come from Missouri? Something inside told me not to do it. For hours that evening I battled with myself on that question. Finally I got quiet. I said: "No, I will not do it." And it turned out for the best, for I got a selection better than any of the rest.

Karl Goebel had told us that a man had filed on a piece of land a few miles away. He had built a little house on it and then had to abandon it. He had had a homestead before, had sold it, then changed his name, filed on this land and swore he never had a homestead before. Now the sheriff was looking for him, he had vanished and would never show up again.

Now somebody could cancel this land, and the boys had decided to let me do that. Immediately I assented. I suggested we pack up and leave for Moose-Jaw at once. We would have to pass that homestead place, then I could have a look at it, and then we could rush to the Land Office and sign the papers.

Everybody was highly pleased with my suggestion. The driver had been home all morning and had a dinner of some sorts ready. Then we got going. I had a long look at my future home, I liked it great. It was 320 acres, all level land, close by the main trail and later only 1½ miles from a R. R. depot. The unseen hand had guided me again and taken care of me in a perfect way.

### *Dissappointment At The Land Office*

After we had spent another night in the Lake Hotel we drove the horses as fast as they could go, so we might get to the land office in Moose-Jaw before 5 P. M., closing time. We made it! Everybody filed on his choice and was very happy, but me. I was told I could not cancel because the first man had yet several weeks time to go on the land and start his duties. I told them the man had done crooked work and would never show up again. It helped me nothing. The law was the law. If I wanted that land I had to wait or take some other land.

That night I was the most miserable man in town. I felt like hanging between heaven and earth. It was like gall and wormwood to my heart when I saw Dan Booi sitting on the sofa by the side of his wife and tell her with shining eyes about the homestead he had found and filed on. I was sorely tempted to grab that land Mr. Dyson Bell should file on when he came from Missouri.

Finally I decided to go home to Kansas, pack my goods and come back in time to cancel the land I had liked so well. And that is just what I did. O, what faith! Breaking up a home, breaking the ties of love with the people of a nice little church, and travel over 1000 miles towards a new home, and I did not know where it was going to be.

### *Good-bye Kansas*

After the farewell sermon had been preached on Rom. 12, 12, on Sunday March 21, and the good-bys had been said to my kind people I ordered a car from the railroad. I was very lucky, I got a furniture car. These cars are about 40 feet long, the biggest on the road. I had enough stuff to fill two small cars. Five horses and two cows would fill half a car alone. I had to build a manger in the car and take two barrels along for water. Brother Snowbarger brought a whole load of straw for bedding. Eight of my other friends each took a load of stuff to the depot and helped to stow it into the car. I had a drill, plow, mower, rake, lumber wagon, democrat, and buggy, beside my furniture, which was luckily not very much, nor of the best. It all had to go in one half of the car. 5 horses, 2 cows and 2 coops of chickens took more than the other half.

Old faithful Pete Long had been a homesteader himself in Kansas once, and he knew what was ahead of me. He donated  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton of shelled corn. What a boon for me! I knew it later. When I looked at the straw I knew, that it would be good for bedding but poor for feed. So I bought a ton of baled hay, mostly alfalfa. This I piled on top of my furniture and machinery.

When it seemed impossible to get all the machinery in the car I suggested to leave behind the mower and rake. Then my old standby, Bro. Fred Yust, spoke up: "No, these are standard machines and Bro. Shubert can always get repairs for them. Better put them in." We did, and later I was mighty glad of it. That old mower cut a lot of hay before we could afford a new one.

On top of the hay way up under the roof I made my bed, the horses kept the car warm and it was almost cozy in there in spite of the very cold weather. I must not forget my faithful dog, Rover, who went along. The trip was hard on his bowels. He was very sick after our arrival but pulled thru. Later on, when I often had to leave the family for several days, I always felt better to know Rover was here for protection. Rover was great to protect our chickens from hawks. If any big birds got near the place Rover would chase after them until they were out of sight.

### *I Unfrock*

One thing on this journey in the freight car I will never forget. As soon as we had left Sylvia I unfrocked. I pulled off my ministers clothes and put on overalls. That meant more to me than I can ever describe. It gave me a great pain in my heart, a sorry almost bitter feeling. Now, I said, my life is changed from the pulpit to the plow, from the privileged position of a beloved pastor to a common position in the ranks. I am just one more farmer, a dirt farmer, yes hardly that, only a homestaeder! Nobody, that has not gone thru the same experience can fathom the feelings, that overcame me at that time. I felt almost like an outcast, yet it had been my own decision. I felt like a Jonas running away from the Lord yet I seemingly could do nothing else. I felt, that I was led by a strong hand, that had prepared the way before me in all details. I could not do anything else, yet I felt responsible as it was my own decision—who can fathom, connect or straighten out the tangles of life?

### *Kansas City — Minneapolis*

In due time we arrived in Kansas City. Here I was no stranger. I went to a restaurant to get maybe the last hot meal of the trip. My diary says I paid 10c for the meal. Times sure have changed.

When I came back a man from another car told me that he had forced a negro to bring back a coop of chickens he had filched out of my car. I thanked him and a kind providence that had protected me. Henceforth I kept better watch of my stuff.

A worker in the yard handed me a water-hose and filled my barrels with water for my stock. In Minneapolis we had to unload our livestock for exercise and water. After that we went thru a tremendous lot of shunting and switching. Bang-Bang-Bang it went all the time. I thought, it would never end. But all bad things stop after awhile. A little endurance will conquer them. Then the train rolled swiftly over the plains of Minnesota and the Dakotas. Time flew. At Portal we entered Canada and soon we were in Moose-Jaw. My car was shunted on a sidetrack and I was

### *Told To Unload*

When I loaded this car I had it easy. The good brethren in Sylvia did

is all. Here was nobody to take care of me, I was strictly on my own. Nobody cared what happened to me. I had to dig into my pocket and hire another homesteader to help me unload.

Some of my horses I had never driven before. When they went off with the first load they ran away. It was lucky that my helper held on for dear life and guided them into the yard of the Pioneer Lumber Co. ,where we had been given space to store our goods. After the horses had been quieted down, he decided they had been hitched wrong. He changed them and lo and behold now they were doing alright. In the meantime I was at the car not knowing how near I had come to a bad smashup. The unseen hand had watched over me again.

### *We Settle With the Goebels*

We stored our furniture in an empty room the Goebels had offered us. After my family had arrived and rested up for a day or two we were ready to leave for the homestead. When we wanted to settle with the Goebels, we found out, why they had so kindly invited us into their boarding house. They presented a big bill, charging for every little thing, even a big rent for the room our furniture was stored in. Immediately I moved everything to the lumber yard, where they gave me an empty room in a shed. They never charged me a cent, and some of our stuff was there for a month.

I appealed to the Goebels, to have mercy and charge me lightly. They laughed in derision at the nerve of the homesteader to ask such a thing. Well, it took almost our last cent, but we paid, grinned and bore it, but the Goebels left a bitter taste in our mouth. Later on we found that they did not belong to the elite of the city. The father was a loafer and drinker. Hit two sons followed him closely. They never amounted to anything and soon vanished from their homesteads. Then the mother heroically took over one of them. She was around for awhile. Then she vanished. Without character there can be no success. Without true religion, character has no chance to develop. While character can be helped along by education and religion, yet a lot of it is inherited. To pass on a good and strong character to your children is worth more than to pass on a fortune in silver and gold.



### *We Cancel a Homestead*

April 14, 1909 was my great day at the landoffice. Now or never was the time to cancel that 320 acres, which I wanted. As we were boarding with the Goebels we had our ears to the ground and got wise, that Karl had told several people about this land. So I decided to take no chances and be first.

At 5 a. m., I was at the door of the landoffice. I found two other men there already, holding on to the door knob for dear life. Luckily they were not after my selection. It was a hard wait until 9 a. m. Have you ever stood before a door for 4 hours steady? Then you know what a task it was, but it was worth the price. By 9 o'clock the corridor was filled and the wide stairway down to the street was full of eager humanity. There were probably 100 people, all quivering inside with feverish expectation, whether they would get the piece of land they wanted so much.

The clerks in the landoffice must have had another private stairway. Punctually at 9 they opened the door from the inside. One clerk came out and handed us slips of paper with numbers on it. I received No. 3. There were three clerks waiting on the counter, so I got served right away. After I had given the clerk the numbers of the land I wanted to cancel he got the big book, looked it up, put my name and address down and I would have the first right to get this land, if the cancellation was successful.

What did cancelling a homestead mean? It meant an accusation that the man who had filed on that land was not doing his duties. First of all, he was not living on the land, and second, he did nothing in the line of plowing.

The law expected a man to live on his choice 6 months in the year. Then he could go away, make some money for 6 months, so he could live on the land another 6 months. He was expected to plow 10 acres a year. If anybody canceled him, he was given 60 days to defend himself and move on to the land, if he was absent.

Well, what about my case I had heard, that my man would not come back, because the sheriff was after him. He had had a homestead before, had sold it when he got the title. Then he changed his name and filed, illegally, on a second homestead. He was found out, flew the coop and would never return. So I had an iron-clad case, a sure thing.

When I went out of the door that morning at the land office a man stopped me and asked: "Did you cancel that land?" "Yes," I said. He had wanted to do the same thing, but was too late. He had to take something else, and at that time there was lots of it to be had.

### *I File On The Homestead*

Sure enough, two or three months later I was notified that I had 30 days to file on this land. On a Saturday, shortly before noon, closing time, I presented myself at the landoffice. They demanded \$100 for the buildings on the place. I had only \$65. The clerk shook his head: "No, that won't do." In the deep anguish of my heart I promised to pay the balance, if the homestead inspector would say so.

The clerk did not know what to do. He asked another clerk for advice. Then he went into the office of the headman. When he returned he said: "We will let you file, but you got to pay more if it is demanded." A load like 10 tons rolled off my heart. I could not help but exclaim: "God bless you!" The unseen hand had smoothed the way wonderfully.

Rejoicing with a singing heart I went home and never heard another word about it. I believe the man that built the house never even claimed the \$65. He was scared far too much.

### *Proving-up On The Homestead*

About three years later I took two of my neighbors to the land office and there they witnessed that I had done all the duties required. In fact, I had done double duties. We had lived on the land all the time and had plowed far more land than necessary. This was called, "Proving Up."

In due time I got the patent for the homestead. Now these 160 acres were transferred from the landoffice to the land-titles-office. Now I could put a loan on it and pay off some of my debts and get on my feet.

Three years later we went thru the same thing again to get title to the second 160 acres, the Preemption. For this we had to pay \$3 per acre besides doing the duties. Now we had 320 acres in our own name. We could mortgage it, sell it, trade or keep.

But I have gone far ahead of my story. When I cancelled the homestead I asked the clerk whether I could live on it now. Emphatically he

said: "No! If you do, you will be prosecuted." So I decided to make a quick trip out and see the boys in the dugout. Maybe I could make some arrangements with them to live in their shack for a few months and plow some of their land to get a crop.

### *My First Trip To The Homestead*

Coming home from the landoffice I started packing right away. The family had not arrived, so I wanted to make a quick trip before they would come in. I put some baled hay and other stuff in my wagon and left right after dinner as a brand new homesteader.

My horses had done nothing for a week and were all too glad to go. I got along fast. When night approached it became a different story. In the dark I lost my trail. Driving over a very small run of water, that was frozen over, the hind wheels of my wagon broke thru the ice into 4 to 6 inches of water. A real pull would have brought us out, but Dolly was a balky horse I only found out now. She would not go another foot, and Prinz could not drag her and the wagon.

What should I do? What could I do? A half mile away I saw the lights of Bebbits stopping place, but felt too proud to ask them for help. I decided to stay right there over night. I laid 4 bales of hay on the ground to make a kind of a nest and laid down in it to sleep. The horses I left on the wagon until they would change their mind.

After I had slept a little I heard voices. Somebody held a lantern in my face and said: "What's the matter?" I told them, and now they tried to make the horses pull, but all efforts were in vain. I had a small horse leading behind the wagon. "Let's try the little horse," they said. They tied part of the doubletree to the gear, so the big horse would do most of the pulling. Then they shouted: "Get up," and the team pulled the wagon out of the hole like nothing.

I learned a lesson that night, but what now? Should I go on to the stopping place at about midnight? No, I decided. I tied the horses to the side of the wagon, so they could feed, and I laid down in my hay nest again.

In the gray of the morning, 5 a. m., I was up and no worse for the first night out on the prairie. I found, it could be done, and some money was

saved. I did it a good many times after that. Times without number I slept in the wagon or under it. I slept in the haymow of the livery stable, on a lumber pile in the lumber yard or on the floor of a shack. Had I ever in my life thought I would come to that? Never! But now it had to be done, and we lived thru it. It did not hurt us in the least. Now we can feel for the people that have to live that way all the time.

In due course I arrived at the dugout and spoke to John Anderson and his pal Johnston. They willingly consented that I could live in their shack, while they were away for the summer, to make some money to live on next winter. Readily they gave me permission to plow all the land I wanted on their claim and get some crops for me to live on next winter. Then I hustled back to Moose-Jaw ,where the family had arrived in my absence.

### *Taking The Family To The Homestead*

Monday, April 19, 1909 we were all packed up and left Moose-Jaw for the new home 50 miles away. The Missus drove the democrat and had most of the 5 little children, while I had the big wagon with a load of settlers goods and some hay.

When we left the Goebels we had only a couple of dollars left. We had a chance to sell one of the cows to the foreman in the lumber yard for \$30. The other cow I tied to my wagon. We were hardly out of town when she refused to go any further. I talked to the next farmer and he consented to keep her for us. Now we went without a cow and without milk Homesteading with a bunch of little children and no milk,—yes we started right at the bottom.

We drove 10-12 miles until night overtook us. Another homesteader had put up his tent there, and we set ours beside his. He gave us a little kettle full of hot water so we could get a hot drink for our pic-nic. We laid a mattress on the ground and laid down to sleep. It was chilly, but we did not suffer.

Next day at noon we had dinner of our own cooking near Bebbits. That night we put up our tent in front of the Lake Hotel at Lake Johnston. They were kind and gave us some hot water for coffee, and another raw night passed by.

The next morning was extra chilly, so I gave the Missus a lighted lantern to set under her seat on the wagon. After we had travelled awhile I heard the call: "Fire!" The blanket over her lap was burning. The fire was soon put out and then they had to do without the lantern. It got so cold that I forced some of the older children to get off the wagon and walk. They thought I was terrible cruel, but it was for their own good.

After a drive of 6 miles I saw the only sign of our next home, just one length of stovepipe on the roof of the dugout. The roof was covered with dirt so it blended fully into the hill and the landscape. We could see only the stovepipe, and we had to look very close to see that. The road leading there had been traveled only by two or three wagons. The grass had been lightly bent over where they went. It would have been easy to miss this light trail, but we got there allright.

It did not take us long to move in. The dugout was only 8 by 10 feet. A bed, a stove, table and chair filled the room. We laid another mattress on the floor and we were ready for the night. Next morning we had a terrible snowstorm. We had to hang a blanket over the door to keep the snow out. It drove in thru every crack. The cooking was a great problem. The stove was a miserable little thing. It had 4 holes on the top, but none were over the fire.

### *Burning Cowchips and Horse Manure*

In the second place, we had the poorest coal on earth, and very little of that. It was Lignite, which friend Anderson had dug up somewhere. He had graciously offered to give us what he had left. Before we got there Dan Booi got away with most of it, claiming Anderson had given it to him. This coal was so poor that we had to cover it with hay, or the weather and the sun would have dissolved it to dust. When we put it into the stove it glimmered, fell to pieces and went down in the ashpit. Just imagine how the Missus felt making a hot drink or meal on that stove. In those days she was ready to take the next train home, but our bridges were all burned behind us, and there was no money to build new ones. We had to stick it out.

In consequence I hitched up my team again and went back to Moose-Jaw to get another load of our goods and also some real coal. There an-

other body blow was waiting for me. At the lumber yard I was told that a coal strike was on, that everybody in the city was rationed and outsiders were not allowed any coal at all.

What to do now? I looked around in desperation and saw some 4 foot length of cordwood. My purse was almost empty and I could not buy much of that. After that was gone, what did we burn then?

As a boy I had read, that they were burning Camel dung in Palestine. It seemed an unbelievable story then, but now we learned to do it ourselves. All summer we burned cow chips and we liked especially horse manure. These made a hot fire and were fine for cooking and baking. Would you believe it, one day I forbid my neighbor, Mr. Fenske, to come onto my land and gather this vital fuel. Yes, I did, not because I tried to be mean, but because it almost was a matter of life and death.

When Fall had come, one morning old man Winter appeared with a light snow. In great haste and distress I ordered everybody in the house out of bed early in the morning. We picked for dear life horse manure on the prairie. Before breakfast we gathered over 20 bags. For a few days we were safe, but what about the hard cold winter to come?

I had heard that Dan Booi and the Bells had found a layer of lignite coal and were digging at it. I went over and begged them to let me help dig it for a share of the coal. They did and in course of time I brought home 8 tons of coal. Then I felt pretty good, I thought I had enough for the winter. But when we had burned from that pile for a few weeks, half of it was gone. I knew I had to have more and better coal.

### *Christ Larsen Helps Me Dig Coal*

By this time a new neighbor had settled on our Northwest side. Christ Larsen was Norwegian, young, robust and blond. He also needed coal. He had heard of a new mine 14 miles away, where many people were digging coal. He put on his skates and went along the Lake of the Rivers to investigate. His report was good, so we agreed to work and dig together for our winter's supply of coal. On his skates he went there again, and started work, while I went overland with a team of oxen, tent and supplies.

Our tent was just large enough for two men to stretch out in and for

a little campstove to cook and keep us warm. We lived there for almost 4 weeks and worked hard. At first we had to dig off from 10 to 15 feet of dirt and move this several times. Then we came to the coal. The upper part of it was light and poor stuff, the lower coal was fairly good, but this was always flooded. We wore high rubber boots, and the water was ice-cold. With our crowbar we felt for a seam, then broke it out as best we could. We throwed the coal on dry ground. We lifted it in the wagon and the oxen took it to the next ranch. In front of the ranchhouse was a big open space and everywhere were coal piles, stored there by the homesteaders, until they could later bring it home. Under the eyes of the rancher it was supposedly safe

While I am at this subject let me tell of my experience along that line. Excuse me for getting ahead so much of my story, but I write it as it comes to me and as it seems to belong together.

#### *Hauling Coal In 40 Below*

It was the last day of the year and the weather was exceptionally mild. So I said to the Missus: "I will go to the mine and get a load of our coal." I hooked up 4 oxen on the sleigh with a three-double-box on it. I filled it with hay and a few other supplies. We never knew what might happen, and always went prepared for any emergency. As the oxen could make only two miles per hour, and the distance was 14 miles, that meant I could not make the trip in one day and back nohow.

When I was half a mile away from home I noticed light raindrops falling on the tongue of the sleigh. At that time I did not know what that meant in winter, but I soon learned. I drove on, hoping I would not get too wet, for I always had a dread of getting wet. I crossed the Lake of the Rivers, which in our neighborhood ran out on dry land. I was yet in sight of my home when all at once the rain turned into a light snow and the warm weather turned cold as ice. In a few moments a wind and storm came from behind as I had not seen in a long time. The snow turned to ice-bullets. Then I knew that a blizzard had overtaken me. To turn back now was out of the question. Nobody could face that storm. I had to go with it and I did. Lucky, it came from behind, and it did so all the way.

My oxen marched bravely along, but the last few miles were hard going

for the two outside oxen. The two on the inside walked in the stamped out track, but the outsiders had to walk in the deep snow.

On that short winterday it was just getting dark when I arrived at the ranch. I put my oxen in the big cattle barn, gave them plenty of hay and put up at the house. Here I found others that also felt very lucky for having found a roof and a fire for the night.

Among the guests I noticed a man I figured out as a minister of the high church. The other was a mounted police officer. These did most of the talking that night. I was in the sideline in the shadows and just listened. All at once I pricked up my ears when they talked about the work among the scarlet ladies, that had lived in certain designated houses just outside of the city or village limits. They spoke much about segregation, but it was all Greek to me.

When it was time to retire, I was allotted a place on the floor. My blankets were my bed, my clothing and furcoat were my bedcloth. It was hard sleeping, but far better than outside in the snow and the raging storm, and it really was bitter cold that night.

Next morning, January 1, broke on cold and clear. The storm had passed but it was biting cold. I set my sleigh close to our coal-pile and worked all morning to dig my coal out of the snow and fill the box.

It was 12 o'clock when I paid my bill, hitched up my 4 oxen and hit the trail for home. For a few miles I followed the main trail. I could not miss it, because it was much traveled and being upland the snow had been blown away. But it was a different story when I had to take a branch road. When this trail started winding thru the hills I soon found it obliterated by the snow. I drove along hoping to find the trail again the very next moment. But I did not. Then the sun went down. It was about 4 p. m., and I was lost. Soon it would be dark and I would be all alone in the wilderness of the hills. There were no houses or settlers for miles and miles around.

Again the question confronted me: "What to do?" and nobody there as usual to answer that question but myself. Life or death might hang on such a decision. I noticed to my left a light dip in the broad valley. This was the line of least resistance considering my heavy load. I followed that

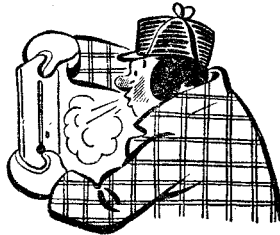


lead. I had a hunch it would bring me to the Lake of the Rivers. Then I figured to follow the shore-line till it brought me home.

Very easily my load sleighed down to the lake, but there I found things quite different than I had expected. The shore did not follow a straight line, but consisted of big halfround bays. These were covered with big boulders and the snow was twice as deep than on the upland. In driving over one of these boulders the iron runners of my sleigh froze fast to it. The oxen could not move it.

Again: "What to do?" I had near 3 ton of coal on, so I had to throw off half of the load. Then we got on. After awhile a new difficulty came our way. We got into a big place full of brush, about 3 feet high and all blown solid full of snow. My oxen refused to go. I stepped ahead of them and stomped out a road for them. Then it became clear to me, that we had to go up on the hills again or we would never get home. How we ever climbed the hills that night is more than I know, but we did it.

After we got up again another fear struck me: "What, if we should go in circles all night? So I picked a bright star to follow, and we went very straight that night. Of course, we could not see ahead and pick our road, so twice we got into a low place with deep snow. My oxen laid down and I was sore afraid they would give up. I dug them out, stomped a road, whipped them up and on we went.



IT WAS 39 BELOW

It was bitterly cold that night. Afterwards I heard it was in places 39 below. I did not dare to sit on my load or I might have frozen stiff. So I walked till I was tired out, then I jumped on the sleigh for a little rest and then walked again.

At last, thank the Lord, I noticed a travelled road again. I found, I was only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from home. It was 11 o'clock that night when we got there. We had travelled without rest, eat or drink for 11 solid hours steady. It was the hardest and most dangerous trip I ever made.

Next morning I slept till about 10 o'clock. Then I hitched up again to follow my tracks back to my coal pile on the lake. Lucky no wind had covered that track. While I followed it I was amazed, I saw that I could not have picked a better trail by day. The unseen hand had again watched over me and brought me safely home.

Right here I remember a tragedy of a later winter. Let me tell it while I am at it.

### *A Tragedy of Storm and Drink*

On a Saturday morning I went to Expanse four miles away, with the Missus. We were all bundled up snug and warm in our big bobsleigh, ready to do our weeks shopping. We crossed the Lake of the Rivers  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from home, where by that time had sprung up the little hamlet of Ardill. It consisted of two grain elevators, one store, a livery barn and a couple of dwellings. Last but not least was the tiny depot on the Canadian Northern.

A graded road had been built thru the rushes of the swampy end of the lake. This road led to the bigger village of Expanse on the Canadian Pacific, where we did most of our business. Travelling ahead of us we noticed another bobsleigh. In it stood a man in the prime of life. With perfect ease he held back a fiery team of horses that wanted to go faster and faster. That was the last time we ever saw him.

We did our business in town and early that afternoon went home to finish our work for the day. Not so Mr. Gaynor, the man in the sleigh. Saskatchewan had prohibition in those days, but a man could ship in by express a bottle or two anytime. That's what Gaynor was after that day. He got several bottles. He could not wait but sampled them at once. He lingered around Expanse with his friends. Towards dusk he started for home. He stopped off again at the store in Ardill and left there by 8 in the evening. He did not get over a mile from there when he found the end of his trail. A fierce blizzard has suddenly sprung up. Now it was a very

difficult task for a sober man to find his way home, but what chance did a half drunken man have?

Next morning, when the sky had cleared, one of the Fenske boys looked out the window. He saw some object on the prairie not over  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away. He investigated and found Mr. Gaynor frozen almost solid in the sleigh with some partly empty whiskey bottles. The team had broken lose and found its way home, a few miles away.

The young man called for help to his family. They brought the frozen man into a cold room of the house. Here they administered to him, but he never regained consciousness. If this man had left whiskey alone he might have lived thru the storm. He was hardly  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles from a house, where he certainly should have seen a light and found help. But when his senses were dulled by drink he soon gave up. He probably took a few more drinks, laid down to sleep and never woke up again. It was a tragedy of the Canadian blizzard and men-made fire-water. Whoever fooled with these was lost. If I had tried anything like that in that night when it was 39 below I would not be here to tell the tale.

Some of my friends will begin to understand, why I never dilly-dally with drink, or why I for once felt so mortally ashamed and out of place, when I was seen in a saloon where I had to hunt for a man.

For 72 years I have lived without beer and whiskey and have not missed a thing. When I look at our 10 children, all healthy and strong, I feel very proud and happy, that none of them inherited the lust of drink, nor a constitution weak and ready for any disease. Nobody can tell me, that a man or a nation that fools with drink has much of a future. They are on the downgrade and no doubt about it.

### *We Move From The Dug-Out To The Homestead*

As I have gone far ahead of my story, now we have to go back to the Dug-Out. Here we had not only the problem of coal, but some other problems as well.

Nobody can live without water. Our water lasted only as long as the snowbank lasted, which had accumulated during the winter, when the snow blew over the little hill which contained our home and shelter. This snow

melted and the water run into the hummocks, the cracks of the prairie. Here we dipped it up and used it. When this water was gone, we did not know where to get more.

Another problem was hay. We did not have any, the horses just lived from what they could pick on the prairie. A fire had burned away all the grass last fall in that neighborhood, so what should our horses live on?

I lay on my bed one morning and tried to solve all these questions. All at once I did what that famous Greek did, when he cried: "Heureka!" That meant: "I have found it!" He had found the answer to the question of the real weight of things by weighing them not in air but in water. So I had found the answer to our questions.

Let's move, I said to the Missus, let's go to the homestead we have cancelled. There is water and there is hay. The prairie fire had not reached that place, so there was grass for the horses. Then close by there was a big slew of water.

What about the homestead inspector? If he should come and make trouble? That question I had also licked, by keeping my eyes open. Last Sunday I had taken the Missus and the kids over to our future home. Here we noticed several things.

First we saw with horror, that quite a number of settlers had used our house for an overnight place, not only for themselves but also for their teams. We found a foot of manure in one side of the house. Now we deducted at once, if other people can live in here, why not we ourselves, especially when we are the ones that have to pay for the house in the end?

Then we observed another thing. About 50 feet north of the house was a road allowance of 66 feet for our future road. On the other side of that lay a Hudson-Bay section. Let me say, that originally all this western Canada belonged to the Hudson-Bay Co. Here they got the pelts and furs that made them rich. Finally they came to the conclusion, that it was better to turn this land over to the government, have it surveyed and opened for settlement. They retained two sections out of every township of 36 sections. After the country was settled they sold these two sections for more than all of it was worth before.

Somewhere in the past I had heard about squatters, and now I decided

to squat on the Hudson Bay. I said: ,‘We will put our tent just over the line on the Hudson-Bay and pretend to live there. If the weather is bad, we will sneak into the house, but if any inspector shows up we live in the tent, until after two months we can file on the land.

Said and done was one. We put up the tent, but the weather was impossible, we moved right into the house and never left it. Nobody ever challenged our right to live there. In course of time we filed on the land paid for the house. Then we put down the tent and sold it. That is another story, but if you want to hear it, I will give it to you right now.

### *The Sale Of The Tent*

You have noticed from my remarks, that when we arrived at the homestead, we were penniless. How to live without money is a secret we all like to learn. Well, we did it, but how—is almost unbelievable—to even me today. Certainly I don’t hanker to do it over again. Once is a great plenty.

When our larder became empty it was up to me to figure out a way for more. There were no stores near us. We had to go to Moose-Jaw, 50 miles away, and we could not expect to get any credit there. The only way out of it was to sell something. We had no crops or produce, so I decided, our first thing to sell was our wagon. I had brought it out from Kansas. I bought it second hand and it was far from new. In Moose-Jaw was Auction every Saturday on the market. There I would have to go. But if I sold my wagon, how could I get back to the homestead?

I travelled all night and arrived in Moose-Jaw bright and early on Saturday morning. Then I went to Mr. Williamson, a fine Scotchman, and he was a Methodist, like myself. I said: “I would like to buy a new wagon!” “Sure,” he said, “what kind and what terms do you want?” I said: “Nothing down and two or three years to pay!” He said: “Alright, we will fix you up.” He was an International dealer.

When I had this promise I took my old wagon to the market. Every Saturday afternoon there was always Auction there. Two Auctioneers were in close competition, willing and anxious to sell anything you wanted to get rid of. My wagon brought \$16. I was able to buy a few more bags of flour and other staples to live on.

Mr. Williamson had the new wagon ready for me. I loaded it with some of our furniture at the lumber yard. When I left thru the big gate Mr. Cross, the manager, stood there, he shook his head and said: "Wonder, how you worked Mr. Williamson, to let you have that brand new wagon?" He knew I had no money, but I kept my own counsel and just smiled.

We lived for a few weeks on the bounty of the old wagon, then hunger forced me on the trail again. What was I to sell now- When we got married a church in Cottbus, Germany, had made us a wedding-present of a few nice rugs. We thought so much of them we brought them over into this country. In our shack we did not feel we wanted to use them, so we put them in the attic, waiting for better days to come. If we should famish we would never see better days, and therefore these rugs went to the auction next. The sale was disappointing to me, they did not bring the price, but I could buy another bag of flour and a few staples. Our lives were saved again.



#### WHEN WE HEARD THE WOLF HOWLING AGAIN

When we heard the wolf howling again, then came the turn of our tent. It brought a part of its value and helped to tide us over again for awhile. And then—I could find nothing more to sell. I went to Moose-Jaw and did not know what to do.

#### *Mr. McKenzie, The Jeweller*

There was only one thing left, it represented the dearest treasure I had on earth, the love of my companion. It was the wedding ring on my finger. But hunger commanded without mercy. I went to a jeweller in Moose-Jaw, Mr. McKenzie, and offered him the ring. It was just a band of gold

with an inscription. He tested out the gold karat and then he said to me: "You will be surprised to find out how little gold is worth when you want to sell it." "Well," I said, "how much?" The answer almost stunned me: "One Dollar." I felt, as so the floor should give away and the earth engulf me. Should I make that sacrifice? Should I sell this dearest token of love for one dollar? I saw no way out of it and said: "Take it."

Now a new surprise was waiting for me, greater than any before, for the man answered: "I know just how you feel, for I have a ring myself, so I will borrow you a couple of dollars." He gave me the money and I handed over the ring. But he did not accept it. "No," he said, "I will not take it from you, keep it. If I were a rich man I would help you more. I can't make a business of lending out money, but once in awhile I send my bread over the water. When it returns I help somebody else." "Well," I said, "than I will give you my name and address." "No," he answered, "I do not want it. I leave it entirely up to you to pay me back whenever you can."

I left that store dumbfounded and yet unspeakably glad. This man had done more to encourage me than had happened in a very long time. No, not all men were cold, greedy or hardboiled, some had a very warm and human heart. It warms my soul and body even today as I live these things over again in my mind and memory.

Did I pay this man back? Sure! But from what?

### *Making Money On The Side*

I found, that others were doing it, so I followed the lead. What? Locate Homesteaders!

On my trip to Moose-Jaw I would call at the land office and ask for a couple of township plats, showing the open land. While there I would cash in on my knowledge of German. My ears would tell me, that there were Germans around. Soon I was acquainted with two young men, looking for a homestead but not knowing the ropes. So I told them which plats to ask for. I would take them out and show them the country. I would board them also, but after they had decided on a location, they would have to go back to Moose-Jaw in their own way. My charges would be \$15 each for all these services. They agreed and went along.

When night came we put up a small tent, and my new friends, August and Julius did the cooking. They were used to "roughing it."

Next day we had to cross the hills, and as my team had quite a load to draw and were kind of weak from the meager rations, I encouraged my friends to consider themselves third class passengers. What did I mean with that hint?

A certain bus-driver was selling three kinds of tickets in the same bus. When they asked for an explanation, he said: "Whenever we go up a hill the first class travels in the bus, second class travels on foot and third class helps to push the Bus."

When we came to the homestead we gave them the spare room. Where was that? In the attic! We had no stairs in our little house, 14 by 16. The attic was kind of low, the studding gave them only two feet, then came the roof. There was not much room to stand up, but we Germans mostly sleep laying down.

We travelled around and looked over the lay of the land. After a couple of days they had decided, to let Gus take 320 acres and Julius found only 160 acres and was satisfied. It took them a day to walk back to Moose-Jaw. There they filed on their land. Then they struck out to earn some money to start living on their homesteads six months later.

One nice day they drove up to our house with a team of ponies and a buckboard full of things. They came from Montana. They had helped to build an irrigation dam, had earned and saved some money. Then they bought this outfit and were ready to start homesteading.

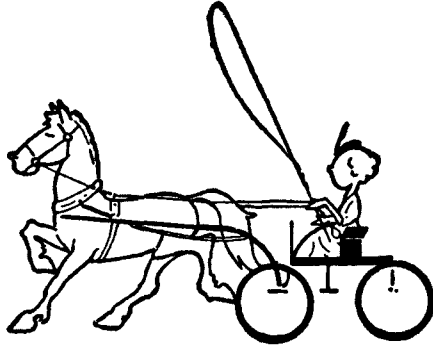
Well, to come back to ourselves, we had made \$30, and that was a real Godsend to us. We did it again with a couple of Norwegians and made another \$30.

It also would happen, that people stopped at our house for a meal or overnight. We charged 25c for a meal, 25c for hay for a team, and 25c to sleep. Every cent counted. Later we found another source of income, that helped the family larger wonderful.



### *Mrs. Shubert Gives Music Lessons*

In her younger days the Missus had been a music teacher. When Mrs. Homesteader found that out she begged her to teach her children Piano or Organ, whatever they had been able to drag into the wilderness. Now every week Mrs. Shubert took several afternoons off and taught music.



THE MISSUS LOVED TO DRIVE SHORTY

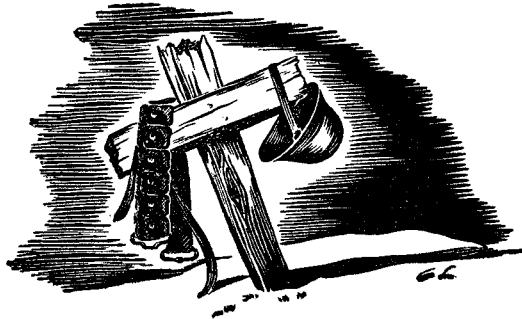
She travelled with a road-cart and felt quite proud to handle expertly that young and fiery horse, "Shorty." One day Shorty was too anxious to go home, he felt so good that he kicked out with both hind legs. They came within an inch of our beloved Missus. There truly was only one inch between her and death. Surely the angels were shielding her life. The remarkable thing was, that Shorty got both legs back into the shafts and nothing was hurt.

Mrs. Shubert had amongst others two pupils I want to mention. One was Etta, the daughter of our first post-mistress, Mrs. Crosby. While her sister got the same lessons, she had not the gift to learn music. She gave up after awhile, but Etta learned famously. She was the pride of her good mother. When Etta was playing her mother would sit near by and listen rapturously, and big tears of joy would roll down over her face.

The other pupil was the beautiful daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Willy Quinn. These fine people, after awhile, hinted that the going got too tough and they would have to give up the music lessons.

Now there was a young homesteader, Joe Vejan, a Frenchman. He

came to our house every week with a stud-horse. He had thrown an eye on this girl, and when he heard, that the lessons would have to quit, he said: "Mrs. Shubert, please continue with the lessons, and I will pay for all of them." He did.



HE PAID THE GREAT PRICE

Several years later, when the first world war broke out, he went to Flanders field, and there he paid the great price for the glory of his country.

When his will was opened, they found, that he had willed his homestead to Beatrice, who once got the lessons.

We all liked Joe Vejan very much and I feel, that it is only just and right, that I should pay tribute to him now and to his love for this girl and his country. Yes, the homesteaders had come from the four corners of the earth, but they were deeply human. Romance lived with them and brought forth some very sweet fruit. Whenever we remember the story of Joe Vejan we feel like folding our hands and saying a blessing for him.

When our son, Ludwig, made his auto trip to Canada, in 1930, he met Beatrice, his former schoolmate, again. She and her parents lived on the homestead no more but in the city of Moose-Jaw. She worked in an office and was engaged to get married very soon. It seems she had honored the memory of the friend that died in Flanders field, for many years.

### *Living On Soup*

Lots of people are trying hard to cut down on living-expenses in these hard times of 1932. We certainly had to do it on the homestead in 1909.

On the farm you never lack for appetite, and in the robust climate of western Canada the appetite needed no coaxing, it was there all the time.

Once I met a young neighbor on the trail, and we had lunch at the same time. Well I remember, how I considered my friend all kinds of a glutton, when he opened a big can of Strawberry Jam and helped himself most freely to the sweet contents. Well he had no family and could probably afford this high living. We had to stay very close to the barest staples and necessities.

In the morning we had just the old fashioned rolled oats or oat meal, whatever was cheapest. Even that was cut out after we had garnered our first wheat. We ground the wheat as fine as possible and used it in place of the oats. It made a nourishing gruel.

When the Missus baked bread, and that was twice a week, I always bought a bag of the cheap "Red Dog Flour." She used a cup or two of that in every baking, mixed with the white flour. That made our bread cheaper, heavier and dark in color. It was neither as dry and paper-like as we buy bread nowadays. After we had our own ground wheat we used that in place of the Red-Dog-Flour.

We were liberal users of potatoes, especially after we had raised them ourselves. In the first year potatoes were so scarce that Dan Booi told me he was saving the potato-peelings to plant them. What success he had I never found out. It looked screwy to me, but it gives an idea of how we tried to cut corners.

Every night was soup-night with us. Sometimes we had potato-soup, and most of the time we had just flour-soup. I saw it made so often, that I will leave the receipt here for posterity.

Let a big spoon of lard melt in an iron kettle, put a cup or two of flour to it, stir till its well browned, then put in water enough for all the family, season and let it simmer till done. Most simple, isn't it?

These simple foods saved our pocketbook. They kept us healthy and strong enough to do our daily work. In ten years we never had a Doctor near us. In the first few years there was no Doctor closer than 50 miles. Later we had them inside of 5 miles. We were extra good friends with them, but their services were never needed. And while I am at it, let me

tell you that 5 children were born on the homestead, but the father had to be everything: Doctor, Nurse, Cook, Washwoman, Housekeeper, and everything else. It certainly was Pioneer-life to the full 100% and more.



I WAS THE NURSE AND EVERYTHING

### *Mosquitos*

Once upon a time I heard that in a certain country the Mosquitos were very bad and large, so much so, that many of them weighed a pound. That same thing could be said about western Canada, although I never found out how many it would have taken to make a pound. But in our first year on the homestead we suffered fearfully from their attacks on man and beast.

On one of my trips back from Moose-Jaw the mosquitos tormented me so much, that in desperation I took a feed-bag and put it over my head, while I had gloves on my hands. They just swarmed around me like bees out of a hive. Most every man on the road wore mosquito-netting over his face and shoulders.

What about our horses and cattle? To protect these we built a little fire in the yard every night during the summer. We saved manure, old hay, grass, weeds, any kind of refuse, anything that would make a smoke and do this for most of the night. As soon as this smoke was started you should have seen our horses come to the fire.

We had no barn, so when we did not need the horses we just let them go on the prairie to pick their own feed. Several times they ran away for miles. It was a heartbreaking job to hunt them, so we got wise and bought some strong hobbles. With these we tied their front feet together, and they never went very far that way. They could not run, but they could jump almost as fast as we could run when we wanted them for work. But when the smoke curled up then you soon saw them coming. They would

stand around the fire all night.

Sometime we would hear strange noises in the middle of the night. Stray oxen or horses had come to our fire. Once a team of horses came, that had their back bloody and raw from the stings of the mosquitos. I never saw anything like it.

The first summer was very wet and that made this plague so much worse. We were told, that the mosquitos were living in the short prairie grass. We found in later years, when this grass had been plowed under, that the mosquitos had vanished.

Late that summer we noticed a lot of dragon-flies around the house, and it seemed to us, they were catching our mosquitos. We almost worshiped them, in fact, any bird, frog, snake, or animal, that seemed to make war on these tormentors had a most warm spot in our heart. We would always say: "They kill mosquitos, they are our friends, leave them alone!" The dread of the mosquitos played a big part in our lives.

#### *Two Other Plagues of Canada: Lice and Bedbugs*

I have related, how we got our full share of one of the plagues of western Canada, mosquitos. There was another outdoor plague that was worse, although it lasted only a few days. That was flying ants. These would always torment a man high up, say on a hayload or on the roof of a building. These flying ants would get in under our collar and then work down. They would sting like fury. Mosquitos were bad, but the ants were ten times worse.

These were outdoor-plagues, but when we went indoors we were not safe. Other tormentors were waiting for us. They would attack us by day or night, bound to give us no rest ever. Lice and Bedbugs were some of the plagues of Egypt, but we did not have to go to Egypt for them, we had a fearfull plenty in Canada.

In all my 36 years before I had only once experienced lice when a painter brought them into our house, but here one day I was horrified when trimming hair for our boys I found the head crawling with them. Soon I began to scratch myself, and well do I remember, how every night I would

pull my shirt off and then spread it on the table under the light hunting for cooties.

There is little doubt in my mind, why we homesteaders had this humiliating experience. In the first place, we were crowded together far too much. The one room shack, 10 by 12, or, 12 by 12, was far too common, and some were built from sod. Then water was often very scarce and beside, it was fearfully hard. To wash us or anything was a chore we dreaded. Bath were unknown. Lastly over 75% of the settlers were batchelors. There were no laundries in 50 to 100 miles. Just imagine, how much washing these batchelors did on Saturday night or Monday morning.



JUST IMAGINE HOW MUCH WASHING WAS DONE  
SATURDAY NIGHT OR MONDAY MORNING

Lice in the soldiers trenches in mud and dust and dirt are understandable, but in our homes they are a disgrace, because soap and water will conquer them. After a hard fight we got rid of them. We felt like holding our head up again. Then another curse struck us, and this was worse: bedbugs.

One night I woke up. I felt a sting on my neck. I hit it, and my finger was full of blood. I had never known bedbugs before, now I had the acquaintance, and I did not like it. Boy oh boy what a comedown! Sometimes we had almost felt like outcasts here in the wilderness of western Canada. We had become a poor homesteader, that did not know what to live on tomorrow. Now we had even lice and bedbugs. Could we go down any deeper? Really it was no wonder that some of these homesteaders lost their mind and had to be taken to an asylum for awhile.

Yes sir, now we started a grim war with the bedbugs. We did not know how to go about it, we just went on killing, killing and killing. Every night the bugs started a new attack. About midnight they had me fighting

mad. I grabbed the kerosene lamp in one hand with the other I pulled quickly the pillow from under the baby. Then I hunted on the wall near our bed, then into the next room to hunt around the children's bed. I soon knew where they were hiding.

In the daytime the Missus would paint the beds with kerosene. We even tried gasoline. We blew insect powders in the cracks of the walls around the beds, but there were always more and more and more. It looked hopeless.

An old carpenter, Mr. Leiding, told me, that repeatedly he had opened bundles of red shingles and found the bugs right in there. No wonder, we all had them.

One day I read in a paper, how a lady had used an English insect powder and had gotten rid of the plague. Then I bought that powder, the Missus used it freely and we also had a glorious victory.

In later years after we had returned to civilization we found that bed-bugs were not only to be found on the prairie in the wild and woolly west, but also in other places. Now we started the fight all over. They were not as numerous as the first time, but they were just as humiliating and unbearable. To my great dismay I had forgotten the name of that powder, so we fought in the dark again.



"YOU WISH A BATH, MADAM."

"IF I DO, YOU NEED'NT REMIND ME OF IT!"

One day I sent to Cornell for a bulletin on Bedbugs. There they told about a powerful poison and how to use it. I went to one drug store after another to buy it, but I was refused everywhere. Probably only commercial "Exterminators" can buy it. Not so long ago I saw in the paper where one of them had treated a house with the poison. Apparently he had not locked the house. A little boy went into it to hide or play. When they found him the fumes had killed him.

In looking for help I found, that "Toxite" was advertised to kill bedbugs. We got it and tried it. We found, it discolored and stained the wall paper, so that was out.

Then I saw another Ad. We spent a dollar for half a gallon. It helped but was not a perfect success. One day I studied the directions a little more carefully. I found that just spraying for a few minutes would not do the trick. We had to spray for 30-60 minutes. Fill the room full with a healthy smelling gas, and it worked! One evening the Missus told me joyfully, she had not noticed any more of the plague for weeks. There was another victory worth fighting for. Its no disgrace to get into trouble, but it is a disgrace to quit fighting trouble!

As we have suffered so much with these plagues, and as I am sure that many, many more are suffering in silence, I will give here the name and address of the spray that helped us.

Either write for a catalog to Bengal Co., 214 St. Nicholas Ave., New York 27, N. Y., or send a dollar for  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon of 9R850 to "prevent bedbugs." I will save this address. If you should lose it, ask me for it, and I will let you have it gladly.

### *Plowing The First Furrow*

When the landoffice threatened to prosecute, if we should live on the homestead before we had filed on it, I did not dare to start plowing on it. So I made an agreement with my neighbor to the south-west, Tom Washburn, an Englishman. He had four big oxen, which were far better than horses for breaking up the hard and extremely tough prairie-sod. They exerted a slow, steady pull, which would lay over the virgin prairie in perfect shape. I had horses which were better for disking, harrowing and seeding. So Tom said: "Let's work together. I will do the "Breaking," you do the "Working" and the "Seeding," and we will go halves on the crop"



That looked good to me and I gave him the "Go-ahead" sign. After he had "broke" about 15 acres he changed his mind. He came to me and said: "I think I will work and seed the land myself and you better start plowing on your own land, I am sure no homestead-inspector will ever bother you." What could I do, but let him have his way, I always tried to be agreeable. But I never went into another business deal with him. It does not take long even in a brand new country to evaluate your new neighbors and put them in the proper place.

Now I had to start plowing. I had never done any of it before, and did hardly know how to go about it. I had heard from a young fellow, that he had planted a flag in the ground and then steered his team towards that flag. That way his first furrow became a straight furrow and you know that is all-important. If the first furrows in your life are straight, there are all the chances in the world, that your whole life will be straight, a joy to yourself and everybody else.

I had no flag, but did the next best thing. First I picked out a nice piece of land, then I set my wagon on a slight rise of it and used the wagon as my flag. Sure, I could not fail to see that. I walked my horses straight up to it and back. My first round-trip furrow was done. Then I went around and around, and my field got wider and wider. When I came to the headlands I let the plow slip out of the furrow, let it tumble over and drag along until I set it in again on the back-furrows. As my field was not very long soon I dragged the plow as much as I plowed it.

Soon I learned to lay out new furrows and plow another land until the lands came together and made one big field. Later on I learned not to lay out little fields, but plow half a mile or a full mile, so as not to lose so much time in idle walking along the headlands. I heard that a good plowman would walk 20 miles behind the plow and call it a day.

My first plow was a hand plow. I soon found out, that it was very hard and even dangerous to work with a handplow in that heavy and hardbaked soil. One of the Bell boys got hit so hard by the plowhandles he broke some ribs. So after awhile I got me a sulky-plow, to do a better job and do it easier too.

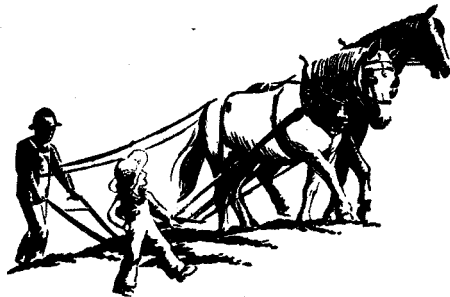
After I had started plowing I soon ran into some stones. Here in New York we have plenty of land that harbors millions of them, and it is im-

possible to clean them out, but in Canada we had hardly enough for the foundation of our buildings. Some men took no notice of them. "Plow them under," said one to me.

I have always been a very particular man. I now believe, that sometimes I could have accomplished a lot more if I had shut my eyes more. I simply could not do it, it was against my very nature. So when I went along plowing and struck a cobble stone or a rock, I said: "Ho." As I had no other tools I took my pocket-knife and dug ut the stone, (Don't laugh).

On my next trip to Moose-Jaw I bought a crow-bar and a pick, now it was fun to dig out the rocks. I dug some that weighed 500 lbs., and more. Now, after I had plowed a field I knew it was free of stone, I had no fear, that I would ever run into them again.

You can see how much I was afraid to run into a rock when plowing. Once my plow struck a rock. For some reason it did not stop or break anything. The team kept on going very slowly. They pulled the plow on top of the rock and then stopped suddenly. For a moment the plow balanced. The next moment it turned gently over and threw me off. As it was I landed straight on my head. Mrs. Shubert just happened to be there and did she have a big laugh seeing me standing on my head, but i did not think it was so funny.



I NEEDED A LOT OF HELP

Right now I remember annother thing. When I used that handplow I found it impossible to handle the plow and the lines at the same time. I also found, that some of the sods flapped back and made a bad job. So I ordered the whole family to help me. The Missus held the lines to guide the horses, I held the plow, one of the boys held the whip to keep the

horses going, and the other children followed behind to keep the sods from flopping back. What an outfit! My folks certainly roasted me good and plenty for being so impractical and needing so much help. It certainly hastened the buying of the sulky-plow.

We surely were some real homesteaders and back-to-the-landers. But after awhile we learned and held our place against the old-timers, that had been on the farm all the while. It is no disgrace not to know, but it is a big disgrace not to learn.

### *Seeding The First Field*

After I had done a good chunk of plowing I started to work the land and get it ready for the seed. One bag of flaxseed was all I had and all I needed. Quite a feeling surged thru me after I had put the seed in the seeder and was ready to drill it into the ground. I could not help but pull my cap off, close my eyes and say: "Lord bless this seed. Let it grow and bear fruit so we may live thru the next winter." Yes, we can prepare the soil and get the best seed, but there our efforts stop; God has to give the increase. Far too often we forget this, too often we want all the credit, when really very little belongs to us.

God did bless the seed. It was flax, generally the first crop on new land. It grew wonderful. On Sunday afternoons I would take the Missus to go and look at our crop. We stood there by the field and felt so glad and proud.

When this field of flax got into bloom there was nothing that could beat it for sheer beauty. Maybe a heavy stand of buckwheat with its snow-white flowers is a glorious sight here in good old New York, but when this flax got into bloom, it was just as if heaven had come down to earth and lavished all its glory upon it. Purple, blue, lilac, all these colors were there, and every morning new flowers opened and tried to beat those of yesterday. This field bloomed for weeks and gladdened our hearts. Finally the blue color turned into a ripe grey and brown. Some of the late bloom had been caught by an early frost. It was without fruit or grain.

### *The First Harvest*

Now the crop was ready to cut, but how to do it? That was the problem

of prosperity. I had no binder, no kind of machinery for harvesting flax. Bravely I took my scythe and cut one swath by hand. Then I gave it up. It was too tough a job. This flax needed a razor to cut it. I spent \$5 and let somebody with a binder cut the 5 acres for me.

The next problem was to thresh it. Thresh-machines were very scarce in the new country at that time. Somebody told us of a machine that had threshed for our postmaster and would go south on the main trail. So we got busy in a hurry and drew our flax to that trail and built some stacks of it.

Have you ever handled flax? Maybe not. Certainly I had not and now I did not like it a bit. Flax was never bound with twine like wheat or oats. It would shell out too much. So the binder just dumped it in the field in little heaps. To load these onto the haywagon was not so hard, but to unload it again, there was the trick, especially for the novice. When I stabbed the fork into the load I thought I had the whole load hanging on it. I tore and tore and tore and worked myself to death, especially when I had to throw it into the thresh-machine, and wanted to keep up with the gait of the machine or my partner on the other side. Of course, after awhile we learned the tricks of the trade, and some claimed they would rather pitch flax than wheat. Well, maybe so, but I never got that far.

We built a stack of it and from there pitched it into the machine. The flaxseed ran direct into our wagon. I got a double box just level full, 54 bushels. That was my whole crop.

### *The First Granary*

Now I had another problem before me. Where should I put the flax? I had no granary whatever. Here my neighbor on the east, Tom Barnes, a Canadian, gave me good advice. He said: "I have seen people that nailed a few boards around a wooden bedstead and put their grain in there." We tried it, and it worked. The children's bed was our first granary. By night they slept on the bed and by day they played on it, for the floor was too cold for their bare feet. That first winter was a tough one, but we lived thru it.

The next year we broke more land and had 25 acres in flax. It was a very dry year and when we threshed that second crop we had only 25 bushels. I had seen it coming and by the end of August went to work harvest-

ing and threshing north of Moose-Jaw. I earned enough to keep us going till Christmas, and then a wonderful thing happened.

### *Money From ? ? ? ?*

Near Christmas our money and supplies were gone. Where to get more and how to get thru the worst of the winter yet to come, I just did not know. One Saturday we went for our weekly mail and the postmaster handed us a letter with \$10 in it and not a word or message with it. I could only see it came from St. Joseph, Missouri.

Several weeks later I received another letter from there. It was sent by our German Methodist pastor, Rev. Dickman. He asked, whether I had received a certain letter, for which he should have had a receipt from the postmaster, and it had not arrived. In later years I learned, that he had received a sum of money from a wealthy lady of his church to help needy cases. How he came to help us I have never found out. I had heard of him but had never made his acquaintance. But God knew, that we needed it badly and it is a small thing for him to use people anywhere. Our faith was wonderfully strengthened by this experience.

When we went to the post office the next Saturday we received another letter with \$10. This came from a member of our last church in Sylvia Kansas, Bro. Yust, an old standby. These monies helped us thru the worst of the winter. Before this happened to us I had heard of such cases of wonderful help and I had often wondered about it in my mind. Now I could believe anything.

### *Cow Experiences*

In one of the first chapters of this story I told about the cow we left behind near Moose-Jaw when we first moved to the homestead. This cow had refused to go along, so we had to leave her with a farmer. What happened to her? On one of my next trips to the city I stopped and found she had come in. So I put the calf in the wagon and tied the cow behind. After a few miles we stopped for the night.

Next morning we went on, but after a few more miles the cow refused to go any further. I was just passing the last house before I entered the hills, where nobody lived for 20-30 miles. This last house was a stopping

place. I found several men there and asked them for advise. I had a dim hunch, that maybe they might help me lift the cow into my wagon, where I had left room for such an emergency.

These men were homesteaders and had been thru the mill, so they said: "Dig a couple of narrow trenches in a little hill. Then back the hind wheels into them and walk the cow into the wagon." I did that, got the cow in and trekked her home. Here I unloaded her the same way.

Now we had a cow and a calf and milk for the children. As we had no barn we hobbled the cow in the daytime and staked her out by night. One night we had a bad rainstorm. When we looked for our cow next morning, she was dead. Another hope blasted.

What became of the calf? It grew nicely and had become a good-sized heifer after a year. One day, coming home from Moose-Jaw I arrived at the "Big Coulee," which was  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles from home. There I saw a skinned animal by the wayside. I got out of my wagon, looked close and said to myself, some poor homesteader has lost an ox here. He has taken the hide off to save something.

When I came close to home, the children came running to meet me. Then they cried out: "Calfy fell into the well and died." I had been looking at my own calf.

In that big coulee was a shallow well, dug by the government for the benefit of the travelling homesteader. We used this well, drove our livestock there every day to give them water. When I was gone to Moose-Jaw for several days Mrs. Shubert had taken the cattle down to the well. When she offered a pail of water to the calf she refused to drink. She wanted to drink out of the well after the water had come up again to the top. The opening was about 2 feet square. Somehow the calf slipped in and drowned. The next traveller wanted water for his horses, he had to pull her out. A kind neighbor took her hide off to save me something. That was the end of our first cow and calf on the prairie.

At the first chance I bought another cow, for I had heard that a cow was half the living. This critter was supposed to come in soon, but she never did. I never had a cow like her, she voided cream with her droppings. I have heard, that hens might be internal layers, maybe here was an internal milker. I had to sell the cow for beef at a great loss.

Then I bought a cow at an auction sale. I put her in my sleigh and drove her 50 miles towards home. I met a team at a place where the snow was quite deep. I wanted to be fair and give the other man half the road. When I left the hard-packed trail one of the runners got into the loose snow. The sleigh started to tip to the right, then the cow naturally stepped on the lower side. Nothing will tip easier than a sleigh and we all weltered in the snow. The man in the other sleigh helped us up again and we got home alright. But that cow also never came in. Finally she was sold to the butcher. He killed her at our place. When he opened her he found a small calf, but it was hard like stone. I believe that accident killed the calf. It seems, I had no lucky hand with cows.



WE BOUGHT A YOUNG AYRSHIRE COW  
AND SHE WAS A DANDY.

A year or so later I traded in a young Ayshire cow. She was a dandy. We raised a small herd from her. These brought extra good prices on our last auction sale, when after 10 years we left western Canada. At that time

a man offered me a big horse-range for sale, but I said: "No more horses for me, give me the cows," and that is what brought us to New York State. We had paid plenty for our initiation in the cow game, now we wanted more of it.

Again I am far ahead of my story, so let's turn back to where

### *We Build A Sod-Barn*

When we came to the homestead we found a tiny barn there, 10 by 12 feet. Boards  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick and had been nailed to the studs and the rafters. These boards had all shrunk and you could look thru the barn and the roof everywhere. It offered no protection whatever and during the summer we never used it. But now fall was coming and I was worrying what to do for the cruel winter ahead.

Finally I decided to do as the Goebels had done and build a haystack around the little barn. I thought that perhaps I could crowd my four horses in there. One had died already. Prinz, my big black horse got so weak he could not get up anymore. We carried feed and water to him, but after a few days his life was ended. Aye, change of climate and practically no grain were reasons enough to quit. I will confess, that the only grain we could afford, were screenings. I bought these at the mill in Moose-Jaw for 25s a bag. They consisted of weed-seeds and broken kernels of wheat. There was quite a little good in there, but then a law was passed, that these screenings had to be burned, in order not to spread those weed-seeds all over the country.

Well, I had started to pile hay over and around the tiny stable, when I had a visitor. Dan Booi came along to see how we were getting on. When he saw that hay behind the stable he knew just what I intended to do. At once he advised very strongly against it. "Your horses will freeze to death," he said, "the wind will go right thru that hay. It will be no protection whatever." But, did I contend, what shall I do, for winter is coming and I have no money for a better stable. "I tell you what to do," he answered, "build a sod-barn and you will have a warm place for your stock. I will help you and not overcharge you, either." I knew that Dan Booi and the Bells had built sod shanties on their places and that he knew how to do it, so I agreed with his plan.



Next morning and every morning Dan Booi walked the 4 miles from his place and we started to build. First we laid out the barn with some stakes on the ground. We figured, that this barn should not only take care of the present, but also to some extent for the future. We decided, that 14 by 32 feet would be large enough.

When we were ready to plow Dan Booi looked for a nice slough, where we would find some real tough sod. We plowed the furrows 12 inches wide. With a sharp spade we cut off pieces 3 feet long. We put a few planks on the wagon gear, so we had to do no more lifting of these heavy sods than necessary. We drove over with the first load to our building site. Here we laid 3 sods along the first course, grass down, earth up. Then the next course was laid across, just like laying brick. That made a wall 3 feet thick. Surely no wind could get thru there.

After we had laid one course we took the spade and scraped the sods even and smooth for the next layer. The loose dirt we worked into the cracks and openings. It was our mortar to get a solid wall. When we were up 3 feet we put in frames of 2 by 8 for windows. We also had left a good opening for the door. We put a frame in there and built the sods against it.

It took quite a good while to build this wall and one day another horse was down. Dan Booi looked into his mouth and called me: "You see in what shape the teeth are." Some of the upper teeth had worked into the lower teeth. "There is no hope for this horse," he said. After a day or two we dragged it out of the partly built stable and killed it. Only three horses left and one too small for real work. Things were going against us for sure.

### *A Letter From Germany*

Then, when everything looked so blue and black we received a letter from home. My father in Germany sent us 1000 Marks, 240 dollars. O' what joy!

Of course, we could not keep the good news a secret. The old saying was still true: "Shared sorrow is only half sorrow, but shared joy is double joy!" When Dan Booi heard of it he began at once to scheme, what WE could do with the money. He preached to us, that horses were no good for the homesteader, oxen were the only thing. "Take your horses and your money

and trade them in on oxen. Then you are all set. Oxen can live on grass, but horses will die." When he saw that his advise had sunk in, he went a step further and said: "Maybe we can buy oxen together. Both of us sign the notes, and we are both helped."

### *We Finish The Sod Barn*

I followed his thought, but before we went hunting for oxen we finished our barn. When the walls were 6 feet high we called it enough. Now the roof, the door, windows and some mangers and we were all done.

Somewhere I had gotten ahold of a few 2 by 6, about 10 feet long. We spiked two together and made 4 by 6 posts out of them. These we set like tentpoles in the middle of the barn 16 feet apart, and 8 feet from both ends of the building. The 2 by 4 from the original tiny stable we used as rafters. This building had no high gable ends, but from the 6 foot up it was all roof. We had two long sides on the roof and two short sides, just like a tent. We wanted to keep the heat down and save on work all we could.

On top of the 6 foot wall we laid one length of boards all around. Onto these we nailed the rafters. Then we laid another layer of sod on these boards to anchor the roof to the building. The 1/2 inch boards from the first little building were used to cover the roof. Now we should have covered it with paper, but I did not know it and did not have it, so we covered the roof with our flaxstraw one foot thick.

We expected to have a fairly good roof, but it was very cold because the heat ventilated right thru that flaxstraw. The next summer I plowed a shallow sod and laid that on the straw. We shaved the loose dirt into the cracks between the sods, and now we had a warm stable. It was almost rain proof. We had so much confidence in that building that during bad thunder storms, especially at night, we would huddle together here for shelter.

The door was on the southside, the mangers were along the north wall. Our cows and oxen liked nothing better than to rub their horns into the sodwall before them. They wore it off more and more, and finally we had to run up a wall of boards for protection.

The next year we built a sod addition on each end. One was a wood or coal shed. The other was our chickenhouse. We connected it with the main building, so that the chicken would get the heat from there or could do

some scratching in the bigger place. That was my first start in the chicken business.

In one corner of the barn we dug a small cellar. Here our potatoes kept wonderfully. Over it we built a small granary.

We used this sod-barn for 10 years. It was in good order when we left there in about 1918. But when our son, Ludwig, in 1930 made a flying trip back to the old homestead, with his flivver, he found but a small heap of ruins. But in our minds the picture of the old sod-barn will never vanish.

### *Buying Oxen*

As soon as our building was done Dan Booi and I set out with my remaining team and the \$240 to find some oxen. We went to Moose-Jaw and after a little hunting came to the office of Mr. Annable. Here we were told to go out a mile or two to his farm and pick out what we wanted from a big heard.

They had two oxen that were partly broken. These we picked first. Then we picked 5 more, three for Dan Booi and four for me. The man, that run that place, offered us also a nice heifer and a ripe hog for meat. These were butchered right away, and each of us took half.

When it came time for paying I turned over my team of horses and the \$240. Then we both signed a note for the balance. This was a fine thing for Dan Booi, because he got, without a red cent down, meat enough for the winter and three oxen to work with next summer. He should have been very thankful to me for helping him along in such a great way, but on the trail home he abused me fearfully. I stood it meekly until we got home, but when he let go another blast of profanity the worm turned and with blazing eyes did I put him in his place.

During the next winter I saw nothing more of him, but when spring came one fine day I received the news, that he had packed and gone to Moose-Jaw and intended to sell the oxen. Now I had to get busy.

On the east we had a new neighbor, Mr. Fenske. He had horses while I had only the extremely slow oxen. I begged him to take me to Moose-Jaw in pursuit of Dan Booi. He did, and we got our man as we expected in the lumber-yard. When he got on to it, that I was after him he shot his big

mouth off and reviled me without stint. I kept very quiet but acted with decision. I saw Mr. Annable and he forced Dan Booi to bring the oxen into his stable and sell them there. Now we had our man under control.

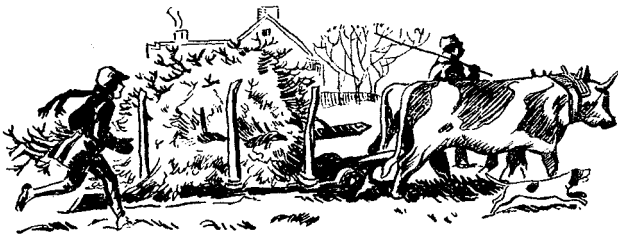
A week later I made the big trip again and heard to my satisfaction, that the oxen were sold and the note was paid. So the beef and pork had cost Dan Booi nothing.

### *Working The Oxen*

Yes, working the oxen was another story. I once heard a good neighbor say: "A man cannot drive oxen and be a Christian." I would not fully subscribe to that, but my patience was often tried to the uttermost by the oxen. In fact, I believe, we white people were not meant to drive oxen. We are too nervous and altogether too much in a hurry. The people in India and all over the east have worked with oxen all their lives and it fits their temper. They are never in a hurry, they have lots of time. What they can do tomorrow they don't care to do today.

The ox was a fine animal to break the hardbaked virgin soil of the prairie. The slower the plow went the better was the job. But when it came to run a mower or a binder, where you needed a certain speed for good work, the oxen were not there with the goods. Not a minute went by that you did not have to cry out: "Go on. Get up. Keep going. Don't stop. Whats' the matter with you?" To keep this up for hours was some job, believe me.

One of my neighbors drove his four oxen tandem. It was impossible for him to reach the front team with the whip, so he took an air-rifle along and shot at them to make them go.



WE LEARNED HOW TO WORK THE OXEN

Oxen would not make over 2 miles per hour. What that meant on a trip

to Moose-Jaw you can imagine. Oxen also would not work in the heat of the day. They would stick out their tongue, their breath would come in jerks, and their bellies would rock back and forth. It was distressing to see, you just had to stop and rest. So we worked our oxen very early, say from 5 - 10 in the morning, and late, say from 3 or 4 till 8 or 9. Give them 5 hours rest at noon and you could get a lot of work out of them.

Some people drove their oxen with bridles like a horse. That interfered with chewing their cud and was cruel. I never did it. My oxen all had rings in their noses. With snaps and light ropes I would hook them together. This worked alright in the summer, but when winter came the slabber and froth from mouth and nose would freeze onto these snaps and form a big hunk of ice. Then it was impossible to loosen the snaps and we had to cut the ropes. Finally I learned to just wire their nose-rings together. Ice had no hold on the wire and we could easily get it off.

The most remarkable thing I saw the time we worked at the coal mine. Everywhere there were piles of dirt, big holes in the ground and the road yet I saw a fellow drive his oxen with the wagon thru all these obstacles without a line in his hands, simply by calling: "Gee and Haw." In later years in North Carolina we owned a mule that worked the same way. It worked in corn and cotton without a line. Our boy simply said: "Gee or Haw," and did a perfect job. But I never saw it anywhere else. Horses could not be driven that way.

### *In The Mudhole*

One day I had a funny experience with my oxen on the way home from Moose-Jaw. I had just drove up a hill. On the top of it I found a little slough of water. I had done it lots of times, so I drove a little into the water so the four oxen could drink. They were abreast, and the two on the outside took a step ahead to drink. The two in the middle on the pole were pulled back that way. They had to wait till the other oxen had filled up. Then they stepped back. Now the two on the pole took a step ahead. Then I saw to my horror, that the neckyoke slipped off the pole and the pole slipped into the water.

When the oxen had drunk I said: "Get up," hoping that the pole would slide along on the ground until we came out of the water. The oxen moved

a step and stopped. The pole had run into the mud and we were stuck. What now? There was no chance to back out. I had no choice, but get out of my clothes and walk in the water in my drawers. I reached down to get the pole out of the mud but could not do it. The water was too deep and the pole stuck too much.

There I stood, helpless. In that moment another team came up the hill. When the man saw my predicament he hitched his horses to the back of my wagon and pulled me out in no time. I was saved again, but it was a laughable experience. It taught me a lesson. Yes, I learned a lot, the hard way.

### *Hauling Hay At 20 Below*

The second summer I made most of my hay in the big Hudson-Bay Slough, 4-5 miles east. When winter came I had to go once or twice a week to get some of that hay home. The snow was 1 - 2 feet deep and there were no tracks. Oxen and deep snow don't go together. Oxen have legs too short for deep snow, horses would not mind it. Right now I can see before my eyes those four oxen on the sleigh going over the drifts. The snow had a crust, but not hard enough to uphold. What a picture it was to see the ox to the right break thru the snow. When he came out another broke in. When one was up another went down. Up and down, up and down. Will we ever get there?

When we passed John Anderson's sod stable I saw his hens crowding the sunny south window. O, how I envied them their cozy warm home, but we had to go on 'till we came to the stacks of hay. There I found, that the last storm had blown away all the snow close around the stacks, but had it piled high a few feet away. It was impossible to drive close to a stack.

Now I had double work. First I had to roll the hay off the stack. Then I had to load it onto the sleigh. When I grabbed the hayfork it was colder than an icicle. My hands hurt even thru the big mittens. I gritted my teeth and kept going. If I had had horses they probably would have run away, but oxen would never think of moving.

At last the load was on. Now home, James! After a couple of miles I got on a sidehill and my load tumbled over. What now? I had heard, that I could put a chain on and drag it back. I did that and it worked. I went on, but the load pulled terribly hard. We had hardly more than half a ton on but the oxen pulled like it was 10 tons.

When I came home and looked at my sleigh I saw the trouble. I had pulled the upset load straight again, but I had pulled one corner off the bolster. That had dragged in the snow. It was a wonder I had not dragged the hay-rigging to pieces.

Well, another year I saw to it, that I drew all my hay in the summer and had the stacks built near the barn. No more haytrips in the winter for me.

### *Plowing With Oxen and Horses*

No, I did not plow with them at the same time. The Bible forbade the old Jews to do so, we need no law against it. We are very much against cruelty to animals and perhaps cruelty to drivers.

After I had drove oxen for a year or so I was convinced, that I needed some horses also. I went to Drinkwater, 50-60 miles away. Mr. Coventry was retiring from the farm and had a big sale. Here I bought 5 horses. One team was broken, the other three were green colts.

In taking this outfit home I was all alone. I went there with the oxen and the sleigh. In going home the oxen could never keep up with the horses, so the horses had to keep up with the oxen. The oxen had to pull the sleigh. The broken team were tied to the right and left of the oxen. The colts were tied to the side and the back of the sleigh. Nothing could go faster than the oxen. You imagine, what that meant to the colts, that would have enjoyed so much to put miles behind them.

Now I had bought all this on a shoestring, or rather a note. Hard years followed, payments came very slow. When Mr. Coventry finally got his last payment he was overjoyed. "You did well," he said.

One horse of the broken team was mean one day. We wanted to catch it for work. It ran away, then it stepped into a badger-hole, broke a leg and had to be killed. Another loss.

In time the colts were broken to work and did well, even if some did run away a few times. Spring and much work was ahead, so we got busy.

At 5 a. m., I started to work with the oxen. At 7 I rushed home for breakfast. Then work on till 10 a. m. By that time the Missus brought out the horses and took home the oxen. I worked till 12 noon. Right after din-

ner I took the horses again till 4 p. m. Then the Missus brought out the oxen and I worked with them till I could see no more, 8 or 9 p. m. Then we knew we had done a day's work. When a man is young he can stand it, today I would not dare to do it.

A year or so later I bought a 15/30 Rumely tractor. That was the end of the oxen. The tractor could do it better and quicker. The oxen were sold, and the tractor soon broke up the rest of the 320 acres. Yes, we went thru all the stages from oxen to tractor.

### *The Lost Cow, or, "I Never Saw Her Since"*

When we bought our oxen and assembled them in the lumber-yard in Moose-Jaw the foreman came to me and said: "Dad, when you came from the States this spring you sold me that cow and calf for \$30. Now I will sell her back to you for \$20, and you can pay me whenever it suits you."

We took the cow along, but we had not gone a quarter of a mile, when she gave us so much trouble, that Dan Booi said: "Bring her back, we will never get her home.",

We had our hands full with the seven oxen, none of us could be spared, so I gave 50c to a couple of fellows and told them where to deliver the cow.

The next trip to town was not made till the next spring. When I met the foreman at the lumbyard I said: "Did you get the cow back alright?" Was I dumbfounded when he answered: "I never saw her since." Then he went on: "My neighbor told me, he had seen my cow tied to a telegraph-pole. When I went to see her, she was gone. Later I heard, she was in a livery barn for awhile, and finally was sold for costs."

Was I surprised, when I heard that. I had trusted where I should not have trusted. Now I had to pay for a cow without getting anything for my money but the lesson, not to do things by halves but by wholes.

Having related the story of the lost cow reminds me of

### *The Lost Horse*

After I had traded my team of horses on the oxen I had one small horse left for saddle or buggy. One day after coming home from Moose-Jaw Mrs. Schubert told me the bad news, that a bunch of stray horses had come along



and had taken our horse with them. They had gone south-west, that was all the clue I received.

At once I started out afoot to hunt the missing horse. I followed the main trail south-west. When I saw a house I went over there, but nobody was home. Back to the trail. After awhile I met a man and asked him. I was in luck. He told me, I might find the horse 3-4 miles down the road at a certain place. When I got there I was told, to go 3 or 4 miles south, and I might find the horse.

Wearily I walked along, then I met an overgrown boy, about 17 years old. With a crowbar he was digging stone in a place, to get it ready for the plow. He was a German boy and that made it easy for me to talk to him. "Yes," he said, "I believe, I have seen your horse this morning. About three miles from here straight south there is a lake, and there have I seen a very poor horse with a halter on."

That sounded right, so I started out for another walk. "But," he called after me, "when you get the horse, come back and stay over night."

I went, and came to the lake, and there was my horse. When it saw me it walked towards a shack. There it allowed me to catch it. I had only a few bag-strings in my pocket. These I tied together and led the horse. Ever since I kept a few strings in my left pants-pocket.

### *Two Men In A One-Man Bed*

When I came back to the little home of my new friend he was gone. The shack had a little lean-to as a stable. Here I put my horse, and gave him some hay. Then I sat down outside, tired, weary and hungry.

After awhile my host came home. "I have made the round of all my neighbors," he said, "to borrow a loaf of bread, but it was in vain. What shall we do now for supper?" I asked him, if he had any flour or lard or anything. "Yes," he said, "I have flour, bacon, coffee and lots of eggs." Well, I suggested, then our troubles are over. Let's have pancakes, and pancakes we had and our appetites were well satisfied, even without bread.

Now it was time to go to bed. I speculated, where I would sleep. All I saw around was a homemade very narrow one-man bed. The floor would probably be my bedstead, if the boy had any blankets to spare. Well, my host solved that question like it was the easiest thing in the world. I was

amazed, when he said: "We will both sleep in this bed. I looked at him with a painful stare, but he said in the most matter-of-fact way: "I will sleep with my head at this end of the bed, and you lay your head at the other end. Thus the one-man bed held two men very nicely. I slept fine.

Next morning we had pancakes again, and then I went on my way rejoicing. I had not found a kingdom like Saul, yet I had found my horse, and finally came home even with a few dollars in my pocket.

After I had travelled a few miles the country looked familiar. I had a hunch, here was the place where Mr. Jolly lived. I remembered, that some time ago his wagon broke down on the trail. Then he came and borrowed my democrat for a trip to Moose-Jaw, he had never paid me for that. Now I mustered courage, went into his house and collected several dollars. Somehow I felt, that I was acting small, but desperate circumstances made us hardboiled.

This horse had never been of much use to us, so one fine day I took it to Moose-Jaw and sold it. I got upwards of \$50 and that helped the family larder again.

### *We Start To Make Hay*

A while ago I told about our first crop, flax. We had a crop before that, the hay crop.

We had two kinds of grasses. One was the slough grass. It grew in low places, where water was standing in the spring. It got to be 2 - 3 feet high. The yield was very good, as it was rough and coarse. Oxen and cows liked it very much.

Then we had the prairie-grass, prairie-wool, as it was called. It grew on the upland about 6 - 12 inches high. After this grass had dried or cured on the stem it made good feed for the horses. The ranch horses would paw away the snow and live on this grass all winter, using the snow in place of water.

To get a crop of hay from this grass you really had to let it grow for 3 or 4 years. Then the stand would get thicker every year and it was surprising how it would fill the hayload. When we cut it we set the mower just

as close to the ground as possible. It was just like shearing sheep. That's why we called it prairie wool.

There were two times in the year when we cut this grass. Either early in June or late after July. This grass sent up a stem which bore one seed in June. This seed was fitted for the prairie soil. It consisted of a sharp needle. When it was ripe, this needle fell to the ground. That gave the seed a chance to bore into the soil and get a foothold.

On account of these needles we also called this the Needle-grass. As soon as these needles were ready for business we left them alone. Cattle and horses did not like to get stung by these needles in the mouth, and we did not like to handle the hay at that time, because the needles would work into our clothes and sting and scratch to beat all. Therefore we waited with our haying till the needles had fallen to the ground. You see by this, how wisely our creator has taken care of even the grass of the field.

One day I got on the seat of my mower and proudly fared forth to make the first hay in my life. Alas, I came home a beaten man very soon. I had not fastened the knife in the guards. It slipped down, dragged in the ground and broke. Now I had learned another lesson and had a bad repair job on my hands. I dare say, it never happened again. My mower was an old McCormick. Newer models had a trick to hold the knife so it could not get hurt. This old mower cut over 100 tons of hay before a new machine took its place.

#### *Mr. Thomas B. Barnes Arrives*

One day, we were right in the middle of the haying, Mrs. Shubert was on the wagon building the load,, when a man appeared and introduced himself as Thomas B. Barnes. He was our new neighbor on the west. He said. "I am a Canadian, but I have been all over the States. I have come to settle down here, for I am convinced that if you want to make money, you must get into a small-grain-country."

The 320 acres to the west had been taken by the Hays boys. They built a shack, dug a shallow well and lived there for a while. But they got tired of it, went to Moose-Jaw and found a job there.

Mr. Barnes made their acquaintance and bought their improvements on the claim. Now they went to the landoffice. After they had abandoned their claim, then Mr. Barnes filed on it. Thereby the boys had redeemed their

right to take up another claim if they wanted to, and Mr. Barnes was in full possession now.

Mr. Barnes made us a very good neighbor, in fact all our neighbors were good ones. People came from the ends of the earth to take up land here, but I cannot remember a single one, that was a bad neighbor. This speaks well for humanity, yes we found quite a few very earnest Christians. The influence of the Bible and the church is far greater than we often think.

Mr Barnes boarded with us for a while until he got established in his own shack. He helped me finish my haying. Mrs. Shubert was especially glad, for now her haying days were over. Never again did she have to go on the hayload or build a haystack, but when it was necessary, she did not shrink to tackle any kind of a job.

The man, that located Mr. Barnes to the west of us had another man on the wagon, and he located him to the east of us. That was Mr. Fenske, a German from Minnesota. Later we got a neighbor to the south, Mr. Cloutier, a Frenchman. Then came Mr. Larson, a Norwegian. He settled to the north west.

Mr. Fenske had a very big slough of hay on his place. He did not intend to come in till the next spring, so he readily gave Mr. Barnes and me permission to harvest that hay. We worked there for weeks and put up four big long stacks of hay.

Some time during the next winter Mr. Barnes had a chance to sell that hay and we were overjoyed when we got \$100 as our share.

We made several trips together to Moose-Jaw. We went into a store and each bought a motto to hang on the wall. I never saw one like mine and have kept it till this day. It has often reassured me and put new strength into my heart, when I read: "Cheer up, the Sun has not gone out of business." That reminded me of another man, who said: "Face the Sun and you won't see the shadows." Right now I think of a trip I made to Moose-Jaw by night. It was a very dark night, the oxen travelled slowly along, two miles per hour. I had all the time in the world to watch the breaking of the dawn and the coming of a new day. Then I knew, that it was true: "It's the darkest, just before the dawn."

### *Sunday School and Stone-boat*

A while ago I spoke about, how during the first winter I was digging coal with Chris Larson on a branch of the Lake of the Rivers. For a month we lived in a very small tent. There were other tents around us, it was almost like a tiny community. One evening a neighbor came to visit us. It was Mr. White, who had a claim on the shores of Lake Johnston, about 6 miles from our place.



WE STARTED A SUNDAY SCHOOL

Mr. White had a big thing on his mind and after a while he brought it out. He said: "I have heard, that you have been a preacher. Could you help us to start a Sunday School?"

I was most agreeably surprised. I don't know why, but somehow I had had the idea in my mind, that these homesteaders were the hum and skum of the world, and now I met a man, that was anxious to start a Sunday School. Joyfully I said: "Yes, I will be very glad to help you all I can. When and where will we start?"

Mr. White offered his little home and soon we had the first session in his house. Here again I was surprised to find out what a fine Sunday School teacher he was. I liked nothing better than to sit at his feet and listen to him.

During the next year this neighborhood organized a School district and soon they had a nice school building. Now we transferred our Sunday School sessions to the new school house.

First we would hold on Sunday afternoon a session of Sunday School and then I would give them a short sermon.

During the next year a young missionary was sent into the field. He organized a church and after a while they dedicated a church building in the village of Expanse, which had sprung up by that time.



WE TRANSFERRED OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL  
TO THE NEW SCHOOLHOUSE

One little thing in connection with our first Sunday School I shall never forget. Did I walk the 6 miles in 2 hours, or did I take the oxen and use up 3 hours going there and 3 hours back? No, here it was, where I got a little work out of my buggy-horse. I had no sleigh or cutter for one horse, so I had to invent something. I had built me a stoneboat from scraps of wood. I still owned a big packingbox. This I set on the stoneboat. Then I used a little box as a seat. I sat so low I could just look out of the box. Now I said: "Getup," and my little horse took me to Sunday School and back.

There is just one thing I wonder about today. That stoneboat had no pole, and when we went downhill, why did the stoneboat not hit the heels of my horse? Well, in the first place, I had no iron runners under the boat, but just a couple two by fours, therefore the crossboards of the boat hit the snow and acted as a brake. In the second place, it was very cold. Sleighs really slide easy only when the snow is soft. In cold weather the snow gets hard and course, it almost acts like sand. In the third place, my horse was old and acted like a sheep. If I had had Shorty on that stoneboat and it would have touched him just once he would have kicked everything to smithereens. Yes, what funny trips we made especially in the first year of our homesteading. The angels were kept very busy watching over us.

*Water*

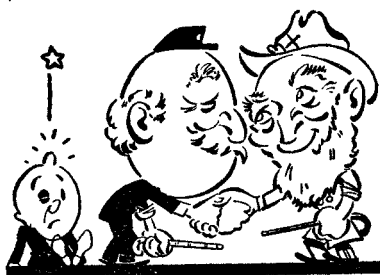
What is a country without water? Nothing but a desert. What is the best

farm without water? I am tempted to say: "Worthless!" But that would not be quite right, for I remember, that north of Moose-Jaw was a country which contained lots of fine farms, and all without water. They had dug wells at great expense, but they simply found no water. Every farm had to have a water-wagon, and every day they had to go 5-10 miles for a tank of water. Of course, they would keep just as little livestock as possible.

Now what did we do for water on our homestead? I have related how we left the dugout of Mr. Anderson because the snowwater gave out after the snow had gone. Then we found water in a slough near our home. But soon this was gone. Then we built a stoneboat, put a barrel on it and drove a mile every day to where the Hays boys had dug a shallow well, 6-8 feet deep.

When winter came we put a barrel in a corner of our house. We filled it with snow and ice, but it was so cold in the house we had to melt most of it on the stove.

Our livestock we drove every day to the big Coulee, a mile away. At the foot of the hill was a shallow well, where all the wayfaring men watered their teams. Every morning I drove my oxen down there. Often the well was frozen over. Then I would hang down into it as far as I dared to chop out the ice with my hatchet, which I always took along.



**HE IS A WISE MAN Who Can  
Make A *Friend of a Foe!***

Mr. Tom Washburn living a mile southwest, also had oxen, and he also came every morning to this well to water them. Sometimes he would get there first, and when I got there I would find the well empty. So I got up

a little earlier and got there first. That made him mad. So he got there earlier, but next morning I was there earlier yet. I beat him by about 10 minutes. Now he was beside himself. He came down the hill mad as a hornet. He overwhelmed me with bitter accusations. He lifted his hatchet ready to strike. I kept quiet and after a little he quieted down also. All the makings of a tragedy had been there, but it was averted. We agreed to come at different hours to the well, so that quarrel was ended amiably.

Tom Washburn, although quite deaf, was accepted as a soldier in the first World War. It was reported that he had fallen, but the rumor was wrong. He came back, and is there probably yet. These Englishmen have a great tenacity.

### *Digging A Well*

When Spring was well on its way one day a team of ponies and a democat full of everything came over the prairie and right into our yard. It was August and Julius, the German boys I had located on homesteads 6 month ago. They had worked out in Montana, and had invested their savings in this outfit. They had driven all the way and were very glad to again feel at home with us. A great friendship sprang up between us, a friendship that knew no bounds and has never been equalled since.

The boys went to their claims and built a sod-shack for each of them. Then they came back and dug a well for us, and without a cent of pay. They went down 45 feet and found no water. Then they tried on another place, near a slew. After they got down a few feet they struck blue clay. Now they tried an inch augur. They tried it for 20 feet and found nothing but blue clay. Then they gave up and went home.

Of course, we felt very blue ourselves, but we needed water, so we bit our teeth together and tried somemore. Mrs. Shubert helped me. We took that augur and tried at different locations, but it was all in vain. Then we gave up.

By that time Chris Larson, the Norwegian, had come into the northwest of us. He was our nearest neighbor. His shack was only  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away. The first thing he did was to dig a well, and he found water at from 50 - 60 feet. That made us hopeful. I told my friends about it. Then they came back and tried the augur in our first well. When they came to 50 feet they



found wet sand. Now they started digging again. From 45 feet they went to 55, and the next day we had 3 foot of water in the well. Our troubles were over. Than we made a curbing. We took 4, 2 by 4's for the corners and nailed boards around it 3 foot long. One section after another we let down in the well. Than we put some poles over the well with a pulley. Now a rope, a pail and a tub and our stock could drink.



NOW WE HAD A WELL

Vividly I remember the following winter. I would pull up a few pails of water, then I called to the Missus and she let out a cow or ox from the sodbarn. They would come straight to the well, drink, and go back to the barn. Then I would pull up some more water, and another animal came out, drank and hustled back, for it was bitterly cold. 50 below was the worst I ever saw it there.

A few years later some of the boards on the curbing started to rot and fall off. By that time we were doing a lot of building and I had a mason on the place. This was Joe Slezewski, a pole. He had some funny ideas about him. Whenever we had a couple of rainy days he would say: "I wonder who is committing suicide today?" He thought that dreary days were so depressing somebody would throw up the sponge. I never had that feeling. I rather thought rainy days were a great blessing.

### *Saving A Well*

My father almost had a holy horror for doing things by halves. Time and again people would bring a job to him that had not been done right, by somebody else. Then he had to do it over gain. How sore he could get about people, doing a job, they knew nothing about. I believe I inherited a little of that thoroughness, that was his. In course of time I put

up buildings and made improvements on the place, that were outstanding. One was our well. I doubt, that there was another like it.

When other wells were dug, they always put in a curbing made from silo staves. This would last a long time, but how long is long? It would decay some day. That would not appeal to me. I wanted something better. So I decided to have a concrete curbing, and Joe Slezewski knew how to do it.

Joe took 14 feet silo-staves and made a form out of it  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter. This form he made so it would curl up or collapse. He set it down in the well. He left the old curbing in the well. This was 3 feet square. Somebody let a pail of cement down and Joe poured that between the two curbings. When it was all done and the cement was set sufficient, he curled up the silo curbing and lifted it 14 feet. Then poured cement again, and so on till he came to the top. Then he connected it with a floor, large enough for a wellhouse. In the floor he built a manhole, so we could go down the well any time.

We built the wellhouse, installed a pump and now had one of the safest wells anywhere. Only one thing was bad, the concrete curbing retarded the flow of water into the well, and we were short on water for our livestock. Now we hired a welldriller to get us a well near the barn. The first well we reserved for the house. It was about 50 feet from the house and every pail of water had to be carried into the house. No wonder we did not waste a drop of it.

How was the quality of our water? It was extremely hard. Ours was not as bad as others, some of it had a scum of alkali on it. We either had to use a lot of washing-powder or use snowwater for washing. It certainly was a very far cry from the hard water in western Canada to the soft water here in Delaware County in New York. Here we have not only soft water, but we have Spring water. We do not have to carry it 50 - 100 feet into the house, but it runs right thru the house and barn. In all my travels I have never seen a county like this. We don't know what luxury is ours.

### *Making Hay On The Hudson Bay*

In our second year on the homestead we had one question that worried us quite a lot. We did not know where to make hay. We did not consider the prairie-wool at all. It was too short and took too long to get enough to

gether. We were rather sold on the big hay in the sloughs, but there was none of that available, all the land was taken up and occupied. There was only one chance for easy hay left, that was on a Hudson-Bay section right near my friends, August and Julius. In the spring it was one big lake with fine duck shooting, but when haying time arrived the lake was dry and had a solid floor.

Right here I remember a little side-story. Our oldest boy, Herman, one day went over to visit Julius. He played around the lake. At one place Julius had dug a hole so he could dip his pail and water his horses or carry his drinking water home. Herman slid into that hole and was almost drowned. In later years, when Herman had become a young man, he went bathing in Wilmington, North Carolina. He lost his ground under a pier. He went down several times, and when he came up once more, he cried: "Mama." in that moment his past life went before his eyes. In desperation he grasped and got hold of one of the posts of the pier. It was very slimy but it saved his life. Nobody knew at that time, that he was under that wharf or pier. He might have died and we might never have known what become of him, for he had left our family and gone his own way.

Now back to the haying in the Hudson-Bay. In the year before somebody had made some hay here. They put up a stack on the shore and left it there for future disposal. They had made this hay without a permit and intended to do it again this year. That was where I and my friends horned in. We decided that I should make a quick trip to Moose-Jaw and get a permit from the Hudson-Bay office, while they stayed home to watch things.

When I came to Moose-Jaw I found, that a permit would cost \$5 and I had no money. Now I remembered my friend the jeweller, McKenzie. He helped me out, but he said: "When you want to repay me and cannot find me here, ask for me at the fire hall. They will know where to find me." I divined from this that things were not going well with him, that he was expecting the worst. Well, when I paid him back he was still there, but later the name of the firm changed. Apparently this man was helping us when he, himself, needed help. May God bless him for his kindness.

When I came home to my friends I found them in great excitement. Some of the neighbors had jumped into that hay-slough, and started cutting. Then my friends figured, it was time for action. So they got their team and my mower and cut around a big piece, in order to save something for us.

When I came in and saw what had happened I chased after these fellows. They were just drawing away the first load of hay. I told them they had no right to it as I had the permit. Fact was the permit arrived only a week later, but they took my word for it and did not dare to show their face again. We harvested all the hay they had cut. We went even further, we also drew away onto Julius' land the stack of hay they had made the year before.

Of course, that made them sore. They went to the next Justice of the Peace, Mr. Harrison, who lived 25 miles away. I did not know about this, but several years later I met this man in the capital of Saskatchewan, Regina, at the winter fair. Hotel rooms were very hard to get. So it happened that I had to share a bed with Mr. Harrison. I had never been acquainted with him, now I found we had much in common. I was certainly surprised, when I saw him kneel down at his bed and say his prayers that night.

He told me how these fellows had come and asked him to do something to me and my friends. But when he had heard the facts, even as they told them, he knew they had no case and sent them away. He said: "Mr. Schubert had a permit for all the hay, and that included the old stack, which they had built without a permit." It did not pay to be without the law.

Well, we built 4 big stacks of hay, and that was the hay I carried home with the oxen at 20 below, as I have told before.

### *Buying A Team Of Horses*

The second year on the homestead was very dry and the outlook for a crop was very bad. By and by it dawned on me, that I would have to go out that fall during the threshing season and make some money or disaster would oversome us the next winter. But what could I do with oxen? Practically nothing! If I had a team of horses I could make \$5 a day in threshing-time.

So I decided to go to Moose-Jaw and buy a team of horses, if they would trust me that much. I went to Mr. Annabel, where I had bought the oxen. Yes, they fixed me up, but it was the worst team I ever had. The horse had the right age. It was four years old. It was a very big horse, but it was misshapen, it seemed to have no belly. The mare had the wrong age. It was 15. She was a good looker, but she was so much smaller than

the horse. They looked terrible together, and one was a little faster than the other, but it was the only team I could get and it cost about \$525. That was the last bad buy I committed in horses. After that I had learned my lesson and always bought young horses.

### *Going Out To Thresh*

On the 19th of August, the birthday of the Missus, I left home with August and Julius for Moose-Jaw and anywhere with a job. (Mrs. Shubert was now alone for more than two months.) I had my team and hay-wagon, the boys took their team of ponies and tied it behind. They were in hopes to find a wagon somewhere.

When we came to Moose-Jaw we found, it was too early for threshing. We were offered a days work in the ice business. The boys had to load railroad cars with blocks of ice over 3 foot square. (Have you ever seen ice 3 foot thick?) I had to deliver ice as a helper to customers thruout the city.

We soon found that men were in great demand for building railroads. I paid \$1 to the employment office to find out where these jobs were. It was more than 30 miles away. Th first night out we camped in a coulee. We put up our tent, hobbled the horses and let them eat grass.

That night was raw and rainy. My old mare groaned next morning, she did not like this pic-nik. We travelled ail day. One funny thing happened. After we had crossed Buffalo Lake and were going up the bank on the other side I noticed with a shock, that we had lost our two tentpoles. We hated to go back and hunt for them, so we drove on and worried how we were going to pitch out tent without the two main poles. We had not gone 50 feet, when lo and behold, there lay two other poles on the road just like ours. Somebody else had had the same missfortune. We took the poles and said: "They can have ours."

In the middle of the afternoon my old mare gave out. She hung back decidedly. We either had to stop or use the ponies. We took the little team and were greatly surprised to see, how easy they went along with the wagon.

Just outside of Disley, near a school and pump, we tented that night. Next morning my old mare was sick. I had a hard time to get her up. I

brought her a little grain, that brought her up. I tried to keep her walking by walking away from her. She got a nibble, then she had to follow me to get some more. We kept that up till we had broke camp and got going. Now we tied her behind the wagon.



WE TENTED NEAR DISLEY

After a mile or two we came to a pool of water. "Wait, I said, I will give the mare a chance to drink." I led her to the water. She sniffed at it but refused to drink. In th next moment she put her head down on the ground, laid down and died. I was thunderstruck. Never had I seen a horse die as quick as that. My, now I had to pay for a dead horse.

I took the halter off the horse and we drove on. We had not gone more than a mile or so, when a man caught up with us in haste, "Have you lost a horse?" he inquired kindly. We wondered, what he was up to, and acknowledged our loss. "Well," he said, "then come back and bury the horse. It is now a danger to my mares in foal, when they drink at that place." So we had to go back and bury the old mare. (Mostly the Coyotes took care of that in Canada. After a night or two there were only the bones left. They could smell dead animals for miles.)

When we came to the next village, Lumsden, we saw some wonderful horses in the livery barn. We hoped, that after we had found a job, maybe we could buy another horse. We were told, that it was about 12 miles more to the R. R. camps. We drove on a few more miles and stopped for the night, always looking for water. That night and next morning I noticed my big horse. It kept alone from the camp and the other horses.

Its look was straight in the direction we had come. I felt, it was mourning and grieving for its mate. Yes, animals have often more feelings than we suspect.

### *Arriving At The R. R. Camp*

It was near noon when we arrived at the bank of Long Lake. This lake was a mile or more wide, the banks were full of ravines and covered with dense growth of bushes and trees.

We stopped and August went to spy out the lay of the land. After a long spell he came back and reported, that things were fine. We could all get work there and the work was easy, it was "Force Account." The contractor owned the 20 teams and the machinery. He got paid by the hour, not by the job. Therefore he ordered everybody to just keep moving, and save especially the horses. The R. R. paid him \$6 for one man and team. He hired the men, fed them in the cook-tent, and slept them in another tent. The horses had their own tent. The timekeeper came on horse back and wrote down how many men and teams were working.

The boss thought he would pay me and my horse \$2.75 a day. When he spoke to the engineer about it, he was told, that one man and one horse was half a team, and the R. R. would pay him \$3 a day. Then he would get 25c a day for feeding me and the horse. That would not do, so he told me I could get a job as stableboss in the next camp. I could use my horse there to clean out the stable with.

It was rainy weather and all work had quit, when I came to the next camp to see the boss about the job. All the men were in the big tent, and the boss said: "You can have the job but I want you to watch my grain very close. I have seen some of the homesteaders that work here with their teams, how they have taken a whole bag of grain in the morning to feed their horses. You must watch that."

When I heard that I smelled trouble. Either the men would kick at me or the boss. I did not like that. Then there was another thing I liked worse. While the men were sitting around, frisky and unhappy, on account of the weather, I heard so much swearing and cursing, as I had never before heard in all my life. I felt like being in Sodom and Gomorrah. I made up my mind to see if I could not find another job before I tackled this one.

### *Leaving Sodom and Gomorrah*

When I look back upon my railroading days, even if there were only a few of them, it was no lost time. I learned a few things, that have been valuable to me. If you want to understand people become one of them. That is why Christ became so very much one of us. Now we know, that he understands us and we can come to him with the utmost confidence. He knows, that we are flesh. He knows our temptations and vexations, and he can give us help if anybody can. He says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

In the R. R. camps I had drunk of water and got very sick on it. My bowells revolted against this alkali water. I felt awfully weak, yet I left the camp and dragged myself from one farm to another, asking for work. They told me about Mr. Comstock, who always needed men for threshing. I dragged myself to his house. He was not home, but the Missus told me, they would probably hire me. He was several miles away on his son's place.

I had to hit the road again to find my man, but new hope boyed me up. I found him in his son's field. They were cutting wheat with a binder that would not bind. I looked for awhile, almost afraid to say anything for I figured they were in a bad mood. Finally my story came out, and Mr. Comstock, who was a kindly man, said: "We will hire you." "Alright," I said, and put on a brave front, "I am ready for work, and right now." Then I received the nicest and sweetest order I had gotten in a long time. "Go home and tell them to give you dinner. After that go in the field with my hired man, Jimmy, he will tell you what to do." Ah, that was a homecooked meal again. I felt terrible weak yet, but I put nobody wise to it, for new hope and life was imparted into me.

### *Jimmy And The Comstocks*

"Jimmy" was a good old soul. Once he had belonged to the Mounted Police of Canada, now he was just a farmhand. He and I slept in the little bunk-house, that once had been on wheels as a bunk-car during threshing time. I helped Jimmy and Jimmy helped me. When he saw, that my strength was giving out, he worked a little harder to make up for it. When he noticed, that I lacked experience, he put in a little more of his own. He shielded me to the best of his ability. Bless his name and remembrance. What he did for me will not be counted against him on the final day.



A glass of water and a piece of bread will not be forgotten, and Jimmy's kindness is all written down.

I tried to help Jimmy. When he got up at 4 a. m. I was up too. I helped to milk the cows and do the chores. What pleased me was that my boss several times voiced his appreciation, because I did things that harvest hands generally would not do. He was tickled to see me try to do my best.

One Sunday, when we went to dinner and the whole family was at the table, Mr. Comstock looked at me slyly and said: "Mr. Shubert, I wish you would let us all in on the silent prayer you have done. Please, say it so we can hear it and take part in it." From that on I was elected to do it regular. Yes, people don't always let out, what is in their heart, but sometimes you get a glimpse that pleases you and the angels.

### *Threshing At The Comstocks*

After a week or two of harvesting and haying we began to fix up granaries and get ready for threshing. Mr. Comstock had a steam-engine as a means of power for his thresher. He had engaged a homesteader, that lived 30-40 miles away near Findlater, to drive his waterwagon. One day this man, Dunphy, arrived. He came with a funny outfit. Have you ever seen one horse on a pole drawing a lumberwagon? I had seen one horse in a shaft, but not on a regular wagon-pole. You know, "Necessity is the mother of invention," and we homesteaders had plenty of necessity.

This man, Dunphy, knew how to travel with one horse, and that was all he had. His horse was a big one and my horse was a big one, and the two made a fine team. So we soon made a deal. When the threshing season was over Jimmy and I went with Mr. Dunphy to his homestead, and when I left there a few days later I possessed a team of oxen to draw my wagon, an Ayrshire cow, a young bull for beef for the winter, some harness and a little hard cash. All that I got for my one horse. Wasn't I lucky? I arrived there a lame duck and left with plenty of pulling power. Beside I had one of the finest young milk cows. She started a small herd for us and did very well.

### *A Sunday Service*

One little thing happened in the house of Mr. Dunphy, that I would not believe possible, if I had not seen it with my own eyes. A young

Baptist minister had started to work in that neighborhood. He boarded with the Dunphys and lived in a small extra house, which stood right beside the Dunphy house.

This young minister had just recently come from England. He came from a family of ministers. He showed me the pictures of his father and grandfather, both ministers. He was full of ambition and was well fitted for this pioneer work. On Sundays he would go out to any camp or group of people to preach and work amongst them.

He was very kind to me. He shared his bed with me and did everything possible to express the love of God, which filled his heart. On the Sunday I spent there we had a meeting in a school house. He honored me with the request to preach for them, and I complied joyfully. My text was Revelation, 7-9-17.

It was about the great multitude, that had come from all nations, kindreds and tongues and now stood before the throne of God. That fitted us homesteaders. We had come from every which-where, but in our heart we all felt to be of one blood, one faith and one love of God.

Then it spoke of the hardships of these peoples: hunger, thirst and great tribulations. We all knew what that meant. There were plenty of sufferings on the homestead and in a new country, far away from old friends and loved-ones.

But the main emphasis was on this: These have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. Tribulations and sufferings may drive us to God, but they will never open the doors of heaven for us. Salvation is not by sufferings, but only by grace; thru the blood of the lamb. That makes salvation possible for everybody.

During the service I felt a wonderful spirit prevailing among the people. They were extremely kind to me. Even a year afterwards I received small tokens of friendliness from them.

### *"Let Me Go To Hell On Sundays"*

The thing I started out to tell, was this. On that Sunday morning, while we were in the house of friend Dunphy, one of his little girls played with her dolly. Then the young minister in the kindest way possible, took the dolly out of the little girls hands, put it on a shelf and said:- "Today

is Sunday and we will put the dolly here. Tomorrow you can have her back and you can play with her all day."

As soon as I had this young man alone I told him, that I did not think it was Sunday desecration for a child to play with her doll. Then I told him of the child, which once said: "When I go to heaven and its Sunday I shall ask God to let me go to hell on Sunday, so I can play with my dolly and with the other children." Sunday had always been a lost day to her, lonesome and dreary instead of being a joyfull day.

I had felt sure, that this story would shake the convictions of my friend, but I was badly mistaken. For over 20 years these ideas had been planted and nourished in his mind, and my arguments prevailed nought. When I saw, how "set" he was, I said no more, beside I also believe, that it is better to be a little too strict than to be a little too lax, and this is the tendency of our generation far too much.

### *"Home, James"*

I was sorry to leave my friends, but I was glad to go home. I had been away two months and was very anxious to get home before another cold and hard winter would set in. Right after dinner I left and travelled as fast as the oxen would go. It was all a new and strange road to me, not the one we had come. Towards night I arrived at a homestead, where I noticed a well of water. I asked permission to water my stock and received a kind invitation to put my stock in the shelter and stay over night.

These people had been Salvation Army people and I felt very much at home with them. That night I slept in my blankets on the floor and was under shelter. The next night was different. I had travelled all day and by night passed thru the little village of Tuxford. I wanted to save every possible penny and therefore looked away when I passed the livery barn and the hotel. I went right on, but when we were about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile out of town I spied a big straw-stack in the field. That's where our hotel was that night.

My oxen, cow and calf fed on the stack all night, yes we even found a small pile of grain and screenings, that had leaked out of the thresher. I told myself, that if any stray horses would find that grain, they were liable to eat too much and die, so we saved their lives. I had a cold drink of water and some bread for supper. Then I spread my tent on the ground in the shelter of the stack. On the tent came the blankets and than I laid down

after I had buttoned up my old shaggy fur coat as tight as possible. Covered with all that stuff I did not suffer that night, although it was really cold. I slept fine.

Early next morning, before the neighbors might detect me I was up and gone. Before night I arrived in Moose-Jaw. Here at the lumberyard I found my good neighbor, Mr. Barnes, with his oxen. He told me all the news from home. He had taken care of my harvesting and threshing, and what did it amount to? From 25 acres of flax I got less than 25 bushels of seed. The year before we received 54 bushels from less than 5 acres. The dry year explained the difference.

The next day we got on the home stretch and after another night on the prairie we saw our little house from afar. It was the last mile, my heart was so full of feelings I had a hard fight with myself not to burst into tears.

#### *Fishing At 30 Below*

Talking about myself, what became of my friends, August and Julius? They worked in the R. R. camps till it froze up and all work ceased. Then they discovered a little shack, which served as a home for the winter. They built a little windbreak and Julius fished on the ice of the lake all winter, often at 30 below. August took the fish, which they had caught themselves or bought from the Indians and peddled them around the country. By spring they had saved a little money and came back to the homestead. They also had traded their team of ponies and had four good-sized horses.



THEY FISHED ON THE ICE ALL WINTER

A few weeks later I went to see how the boys were getting along. I found them in the field, breaking the hard prairie sod with the horses. When I

saw it I shuddered. The horses went too fast. If the plow should strike a stone the man on the plow would be thrown under the horses. I warned them to go slow, but it was impossible to hold the team back. After a few days the boys appealed to me for help. "Loan us your oxen, and you can work with our horses." Gladly did I help them out. They had the oxen for over two months and broke a nice chunk of land for next year's crop.

### *Julius In The Hayrake*

When it came time to make hay again one or the other of the boys came over to help me. One day, coming home from Moose-Jaw, I heard a laughable story, yet it might have been a tragedy. Julius was raking hay when the team ran away. He was thrown off and got into the rake. There he rolled along like a roll of hay. Than the rake struck a stone, it dumped, and Julius was delivered. The horses ran until a fence stopped them. The rake was a wreck. It had been old and wornout, but it did good service for a year or two. Now we had to buy a new one, but we were very happy that Julius was not badly hurt.

### *A Threshing Accident*

Right here I remember a similar accident, that happened to myself, a year or two later. I had bought some colts. I had tried to break them in during the summer, but threshing was a new experience for them in the fall. I wanted to make a little money and helped to thresh flax for the Quinn brothers.

Picking up the bunches of flax in the field I noticed that one of the inner draw-tugs had unhooked from the single tree. Instead to unhook the outer strap and than faster the inner one, I was so foolish to step over the outside strap. When I tried to pick up the loose one, the young team got frightened and began to go. Of course I had to go with them. Then they started to run. I was thrown down and two wheels of the wagon thundered over my body. I felt terrible. Somebody helped me up, others caught the team. I went home with great pains. A few days in bed fixed me up. I learned a painful lesson I never forgot. Certainly, a man, that has not been raised on the farm has a lot to learn, and sometimes at great expense of money or pain. In my homecountry they used to say in derision: "Der dumme Bauer," meaning the ignorant farmer. Believe me, dum people are no good on the farm, they either have to learn or quit.

## *Horse-Tales*

As the boys did so well with my oxen, they were glad to let me use their horses whenever I wanted them. As we needed fenceposts very badly and as there were no woods in sight anywhere, we had to go to Moose-Jaw and buy our posts. August and I made a trip, each drove a wagon. On a Saturday towards evening we left Moose-Jaw well loaded. We drove several hours till dark. We unhitched and let the horses feed on the prairie, but we neglected to hobble them. We had a snack to eat and then leaned against the wagon-wheels for a little rest. We were so wornout that we fell asleep. When we awoke we wanted to hitch up again and drive or all night. But the horses had vanished, so we just had to stay there and wait for daylight.

At 5 a. m., Sunday morning, we were up and around, looking for our teams. A couple of miles away was a rancher we were acquainted with. I woke him up and borrowed a saddle horse. Several bunches of horses came in sight, but not ours. Coming back to camp I found August had made some coffee and we had breakfast, feeling blue and wondering what to do.

Somebody else decided our next action. All at once we saw a car coming down the road. It was one of the first cars on that trail. Like as if somebody had stung me I ran to the trail and stopped the car. There was a gentleman and three ladies in it. I told them our story of woe and asked them to take me along, so that I might get the oxen from home and move our wagons. The gentleman kind of frowned, but the lady in the front seat got out at once and squeezed in on the backseat. That decided it, I could go along. With horses the trip would have taken us over half a day. now it was less than two hours and I was home. That gentleman's name was Jones, for he had his card on the dashboard.

I decided to have dinner with my family and then start out with the oxen right after noon. Then it began to rain, and to go now was out of the question. These trails, when wet, were awfully slippery for one thing, and for another thing, I always had a horror of getting wet, especially on a long trip.

As I had to stay home I might as well make the most of it, so I laid down to sleep. I was wornout too. An hour or two afterwards I was awakened by the shout of the children: "Here are the horses! Here are the horses!" In a thrice I had jumped off the bed and run to the window.

There was a sight for sore eyes, all the four horses grazing just so contentedly as if they had never been away. How could this happen? How was it possible? The answer was "Jim." Yes, "Jim, the smart horse," had led the rest safely home. We heard later, how people had tried to catch these "strays," but "Jim" laughed at them, he went home and the others followed him. He got there only a little later than I did with the auto.

Next morning I hitched the horses to my democrat and arrived at the camp a little after noon. August was not there. He was on a big circle to hunt the horses. Some people told him, that the horses had been at their place Saturday night, but that was the last clue he could get on them. He sure was mighty glad when he came back to camp and found me and the horses. The next day we finally got home. We learned a hard lesson, and hobbled our horses the next time.

### *Smart Jim*

On another trip to Moose-Jaw we slept in the hayloft in the livery barn. In the middle of the night we heard a horse walking around below. A loose horse might start a lot of kicking and cause a lot of damage. August had a strong hunch whose horse was loose. He was right, it was Jim. He had gone for a drink. August tied him again, but again he got loose. It was uncanny the way this horse could untie the best knot we could bind.

Julius worked at my place for some time. He used Jim in the buggy. Jim liked that so well, that after a few weeks he refused to pull on a load again. He decided, he was a buggy-horse now, and nothing could make him pull a load as before. With great patience August worked with him and got him finally to pull again, but he never was what he had been before.

### *The Broken Wheel*

During the winter August wanted to make a trip to Drinkwater, which was a small place on the Soo-Line south-east of Moose-Jaw. He said: "Come along, and I will take a load of flax for you to Moose-Jaw." We travelled at a pretty good clip, and had but 25 miles behind us. We were passing thru the hills, between Lake Johnston and Moose-Jaw, when all at once I heard a new noise. The rim of one our wagon-wheels had busted. It said "Kling," and there we saw our rim running down hill. We stopped

as quickly as possible. It was a wonder, that the wagon-wheel did not fall to pieces. It hung together, but we could never make 26 more miles with it. What to do? We certainly were in a bad picklement.

Not far from us was a R. R. Camp, where they had been working during the summer. August thought, that there might be a blacksmith there taking care of the camp for the winter. He went to see about it.

While he was gone I watched the team and wagon. Fellow travelers came along. Some stopped to see what was the trouble. Some offered help and asked, if we had anything to eat and live on. People on the trail felt kind of kin together and were more than willing to help the brother in need.

One man made a good suggestion. He said: "I saw a part of a wagon a little ways along the road. Maybe you could borrow a wheel there and keep going." I followed that direction at once. When I got there August arrived at the same time. He had found the camp all closed up for the winter. Now we took one of the wheels and rolled it to our wagon. When we tried it on it fitted a little tight, but we squeezed it on. We got to Moose-Jaw and Drinkwater, had the busted wheel fixed, and returned the borrowed wheel when we returned. Yes, somebody had had a breakdown there and left part of his wagon behind, but his hard luck had been our good luck.

On this trip I got acquainted with the people of Drinkwater, where later I bought the five young horses I told about a little while back.

#### *Flax In The Strawstack*

Some other day August said to me: "Bernard, I have to make a trip to Rush Lake," which was just after we had gone thru the hills and started on the last 12 miles to Moose-Jaw. "I go empty and could take a small load of your flax along. I can leave it at Jack's Store near Rush Lake. Then in a few days we can go with two teams loaded light thru the hills. At Jack's Store we can put on the flax I leave there now, and we can go to Moose-Jaw with two full loads over the level road." "All right," I said, "that's a good idea."

When he came back I inquired, whether he had left the grain at Jack's Store. "No," he said, "they had no room, so I went to the next farm where nobody was living, and here I buried the bags of flax in a strawstack."



In a few days we made that trip together. August had given me the poorer team. It was very slow and one horse had no shoes on. After I had passed Lake Johnston I found the road terribly icy. Especially the one horse could not stand up. It fell on the ice several times. Finally it refused to get up anymore. August had Jim and another quick horse. He left home much later than I, but he had just caught up with me and had gone ahead..

When my horse would not get up, I unhitched the other and started towards home. Then the down horse jumped up and followed. At that moment August came back. He had not seen me follow and he sensed trouble.

About a mile back was a stopping place. August took both loads there and we took shelter there for the night. A blizzard had sprung up and we felt cozy in the bunks of the stopping place. I hate to think of what would have befallen us, if we had gone on and gotten lost in the hills.

Next morning August took the slipping horse to a blacksmith on Lake Johnston and had some sharp shoes put on. Then we could really go to town. By night we arrived at Jack's Store. August had gone ahead and dug up the bags of flax in the strawstack.

When we made the next trip past there we saw to our amazement, that the whole stack of straw had been carted away. How glad I was, that we had gotten our flax out of there in time. Flax at that time was about \$2 a bushel. A loss of about \$50 would have been a bad joke for me.

### *The Bloody Whiskers*

Next morning we moved on to Moose-Jaw. It was bitterly cold, probably 30 below, and a mighty sharp wind beside. My team made not much over 2 miles per hour. It took 5 hours to make the trip. Have you ever sat on a open wagon for 5 hours in such weather?

I was bundled up pretty good, had my feet between the bags of flax, but the big collar on my furcoat really saved my life. It gave me protection from the icy blast of the Nor-west.

The steam from my nose had settled on my beard and froze there like a sheet of ice. My nose was sometimes dribbling. These drops would freeze as quickly as they saw the light of day. I tried to wipe them off.

Then I broke the tender skin on my nose and it began to bleed. The blood run over the sheet of ice on the whiskers.

When I came to Moose-Jaw August was waiting for me. His load was sold and his team in the barn. When he saw me he exclaimed: "O Bernard, you are a terrible sight. All your face is a sheet of bloody ice. Go quick into this levator-office and thaw out. I will sell the load and take care of the team." When I looked into a looking-glass I almost got afraid of myself.

I felt much relieved to have that trip behind me. One thing made me almost forget all the hardships: I got near \$200 for my two loads of flax.

When I checked up the returns I found, that I had received more money for the second load than for the first load. I almost felt I should go back and report a mistake. Then I found out, that at 12 noon always the new prices came into effect. Flax had gone up and I got paid well for my slow trip to town and for my sufferings. This was in the first Winter of World War I. Prices of all grains were going up by leaps and bounds.

### *The Lost Team*

I have told a good many tales from the trail and my reader might think that we spent more time on the trail than on the farm. Well, if a man goes pioneering in the backwoods and away from the Railroads, he for sure has to spend a big amount of his time on the trail. And when the climate is hard and severe, than the pioneer is in for a lot of hardships and also expense. When we finally got a Railroad we never grumbled at the "Rates." They were a great deal cheaper than we could haul the stuff ourselves.

One day I left my home for Moose-Jaw with that slow team from August. One horse had a clubfoot and he told me to hobble that horse nights. I followed his instructions, but next morning my team was gone. I made a big circle in the hills to the west. I found one lonesome homesteader, but he had seen nothing of my team. I left my address in case they should turn up.

After an hour or two I came back to my wagon. I had breakfast and wondered what to do. Several miles to the east was a R. R. camp, belonging to the same man we had worked for a couple years ago. Probably he

might have a spare horse or team and be inclined to help me out. So I started out over there. I had not gone a quarter of a mile, when lo and behold, there stood my team contentedly grazing behind a small hill.

Oh, what a big stone rolled off my chest. I cannot tell how glad I was to find my team. So many horses got lost in that new country, that we were constantly afraid the same thing might happen to us. Well, next night I hobbled the other horse and had no more trouble, the horses stayed close to the wagon.

When I told August about it, he said: "I never told you to hobble that horse, you must have misunderstood me." Well, August was a great joker maybe he played a joke on me that time, but all is well that ends well.

### *We Get A Railroad*

In my last story I have hinted, that we finally got a R. R. Yes, a R. R. stood on our Xmas-list for a long time. In all our plans and hopes and wishes the R. R. was ever present.

Every Saturday the mail arrived from Moose-Jaw by stage. Our Post Office was called Lake Johnston after the lake nearby. Mrs. Crosby was our Postmaster. When the weather was good Mrs. Shubert went to get the mail on Saturdays and give some music lessons to the Crosby daughters.

One Saturday the Missus came home with great news. The message had come thru that a R. R. would be built. It would start from Moose-Jaw and come along on our side of Lake Johnston and pass thru in the neighborhood of our present Post Office.

Mrs. Shubert vividly described how all the homesteaders, coming for their mail, just got wild and delirious for joy. They threw their caps and hats into the air, they sang and cried and talked. They were just plain cookoo. The dreams of years and years were ready to burst into reality. Everybody took a holiday and rejoiced with abandon.

But when the Missus came home from the Post Office a couple weeks later she brought home a different story. It had come out, that the plans had been changed, and that the R. R. was going on the west side of the lake, maybe 20 miles away from us. It was also reported, that work on the road that way had already started. My, was that a dash of cold water to

our hopes and dreams. If the road would go that way we would never be much better off than we were right now. Yet, bless the Lord, after awhile the plans were changed again, and the R. R. did come our way. They bought some land from Mr. Crosby and established the village of Expanse.



THEY ESTABLISHED THE VILLAGE OF EXPANSE

Of course, we had to wait awhile yet till we saw the first train pull in. The first year they built as far as Dunkirk, about 10 miles away from us. Trains came to this station very irregular, about once a week. But our stores could team in their supplies from there. That was a great deal better than go 50 miles.

When the next summer had gone Expanse was on the map. It was the end-station, where trains turned around. They came three times a week. The next year the line was built farther south. Now trains run every day. This line belonged to the C. P. R., the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

#### *The C. N. R. — The Canadian Northern Railroad*

When good things come they come in bunches. When the C. P. R. started to come into our country the C. N. R. also wanted to get a slice of the business, and they also began to make plans.

One morning a car drove into our yard and called us out of bed. They asked for breakfast and we gave them of the best we had. I soon found out, that these men were important men of the C. N. R. They showed me

maps and plans. I found, that they intended to put a station in the big Coulee, one and a half miles from our house. That was as close as we could ask for.

These plans were realized in time and after a year or two regular trains were running in the big Coulee. The name of the station was Ardill. Soon three elevators and several stores were built and we could run our grain wagons right from the threshing machine to the elevator.



REGULAR TRAINS WERE RUNNING  
IN THE BIG COULEE

That year we had a wonderful crop. I sold over \$7000 worth of grains: Wheat and Flax. We had about four wagons going between the field and the elevator. The children had grown up and did most of this driving, while I stayed right in the elevator to watch the weights. When one wagon was unloaded I started home till I met the next full wagon and we just changed seats. The boys went home with the empty wagon and I drove the full one into the elevator.

### *The Trick Of The Kids*

A little incident comes to my mind of a little trick our kids played on a good-natured elevator man. The threshing machines in the field had to stand a big lot of wear and tear, so it was natural for them to spring a leak, especially along the grain-pipes. When a field was threshed there was always a big hurry to move to the next field and there was not time to clean up around the old stand.

That was where our children cashed in. They would follow the thresher from setting to setting and pick up what was left.

One day they came proudly to the elevator and sold the operator one bag of flax. They got a good price and felt very happy, but when the buyer finally looked into the bag, he discovered, that the kids put one over on him. Two thirds were screenings instead of good flax. When the neighbors heard of it, they sure kidded the life out of him. Later I asked him, what he had done with the stuff, and he said: "When I loaded the next car I dumped this bag in a corner, hoping the official sampler would not find it."

### *We Build Another Barn*

By and by our Sod-barn could not hold the increase in horses and cows, so we were forced to build another barn. The R. R. had brought us little towns and lumber yards inside of 5 miles. That made building a lot easier. One of our neighbors, Mr. Dennis, was a good carpenter, so I figured this all over with him. In order to save money we built the first year only one story with a temporary roof. After a year or two we finished the building.

Whenever I put up any buildings I was utterly opposed to any flimsy work. I wanted this barn warm enough for the climate, and put four layers of wood on the walls. Two ply outside and two ply inside, with paper between. We also put in an air-shaft for ventilation. When the hot air went up there it condensed and froze to a solid sheet of ice on the walls of that shaft. At that time I did not know about insulating such a shaft, and beside, it really got cold in that country.

In the first year we did not need all the room for the horses so we partitioned off part of the stable and used the room for granaries. Later we filled everything with horses. There was a time when we had 20 horses or colts.

The sod-barn we filled with our growing herd of cows. It began to dawn upon us, that the horses were eating us out of house and home, while the cows were giving us a steady income. This idea finally got so strong in our mind, that, when the time came to leave Canada we picked our future home in New York State on a dairy farm in Delaware County. Here we got initiated in the cow and milk business right, but finally ended up in the chicken business, while our youngest son took over the cows.

Again I have strayed off and jumped over the years, so let's go back and see what we did next.

### *We Hire A Hired Man*

Well, well, the homesteader is getting ahead, and there is no reason why not. One day I considered, that with all the stock to handle and all the work to do, I really ought to have a hired man.

Was it not funny, a few hours later a man came to my place, that had just arrived from Germany. He asked, whether I knew a man by the name of Krause. I told him, that a man with that name was living a mile north. "No," he said, "I have seen him, but that is not the Krause I saw in Germany and who induced me to come to this country. Anyway, whether I find him or not I am more interested right now in finding a place to work."

There was the man I had wished for a few hours before. Evidently the hand of Providence had worked out this thing in a perfect way. I welcomed him with all my heart and he proved to be a very reliable and useable man. This man had a son with him, and when August heard of it the next day, it did not take him long to hire Emil.

### *Michael Pakula*

Mr. Pakula, as we always called him, had owned a big dray-business in Hamburg, Germany. When one valuable horse after another died on him he sold his business for an equity in a big farm. He had hardly got his feet on the ground when by some trick of fate all interest on borrowed money took a big jump upwards. The man, that held the mortgage, demanded a new contract with 6% instead of 4%. Mr. Pakula saw no chance to make that much more money out of the place and live, so he had to refuse.

Now the mortgage was foreclosed. The place was sold for less than the mortgage. For the balance a judgment was taken against him. He had lost every cent he had put into the place and was driven out penniless. Not only that, but from now on the sheriff practically lived on his doorstep. Whenever he bought a new chair or any other piece of furniture, the sheriff took it. They just had to live in a packing-case.

When they were at their wits end, that man Krause appeared. He said: "Come to my place in Canada, and I will help you on your feet again." Now they could not find this man, and I was elected into his place.

As soon as Mr. Pakula had earned enough money his wife and two other sons followed. One was big enough to work and the Missus also hired out and helped earning money for their future home. After a year or two they decided to take a homestead in the southland, in the Wood-Mountain country.

One day I hitched up my best road team, put a few spring seats on the lumber wagon, got a bag of oats and a few other supplies and then struck out for the new country with Mr. Pakula, his son Emil, and a brother of Julius, to find a new home for all of them.

The first night we slept in the haymow of the postmaster at "12 mile" lake. The second night we slept on the floor of "clean" Peterson. There was another in that neighborhood they called "dirty" Peterson. The next day we arrived at our destination. We slept on the floor in the house of Mr. Chernowitz. This was 6 miles north of Montana. We had travelled about 80 miles in three days. Nowadays we could make that trip in one day with a car, but nobody owned a car at that time, at least no farmer or homesteader.

We spent a couple of days to walk all over that country and pick homesteads for our friends. Then came the rush home. The first night we spent again with "clean" Petersons, which were very nice people. The next day we drove all day and the next night also, until we got home at 4 a. m.

### *An Election*

On account of this election I had pushed home as fast as possible. I had been president of the town board and run for reelection. Funny, how this election fever gets into a man after he has once tested office.

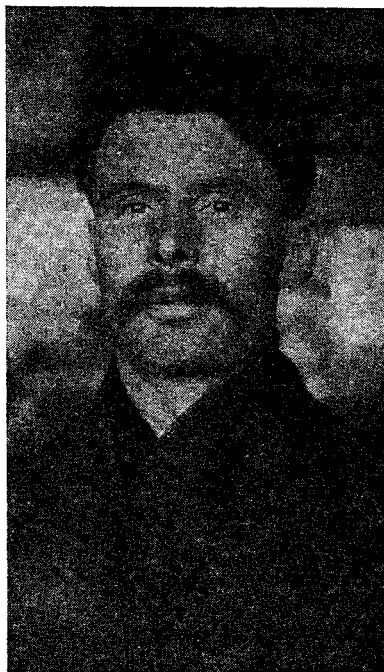
I lost. Mr. Quinn was elected. He was the father of the three Quinn brothers, who all had homesteads and votes. He was a fine old gentleman with a good head for business. These officers of the township were changed quite frequently, which gave other men a chance to try their ideas for the good of the country.

### *Other Hired Men*

When Pakula had left for his homestead I wrote to a German paper in Regina for a couple of good men. Harvest was near and I needed help. Right away they sent me two men, Paul Kinzel, a German, and John Velk,



a German from Russia. Both were excellent men. After harvest I kept Velk for my year-around man, while Paul Kinzel got a years work with Mr. Barnes.



JOHN VELK

The best hired man we ever had. He was 100% reliable and 200% loyal. If Russia has many more like him, no wonder its going ahead, in such a phenomenal way.

When Spring came I needed another man. I found another German, but he was no-good. Soon my old trusty standby, Mr. Velk, would tell me, "As soon as you have gone away, this man says: 'The boss is gone, now we will take it easy.'" A few days later he came early in the morning and demanded, that I fire this man. He said, he would rather work harder himself, than to work together with such a lazy and loafy fellow. Mr. Velk

always was a very meek man, but here he really had his dander up. Of course, that man left very soon.

### *Mr. Bene*

Expanse, our new town, had grown by leaps and bounds. Every business was represented. We even had two doctors there. One was a Frenchman. One day he went into the Chinese lunchroom. When he complained, that the coffee was cold, John Chineman stepped up to the table, tipped his finger into the doctor's cup to feel the heat of the coffee. Horrified, the Doctor jumped up and never went back. He took his meals in the hotel, but that was run by a Chineman too, perhaps a little higher grade.

Excuse me, this story just now slipped into my mind, but I wanted to say, the other Doctor had opened a drugstore, and that was under the direction of Mr. Born. He was a young, stocky fellow, jovial and very friendly. He soon had the confidence of everybody around. He had come from Germany just before the war. He came with another young man, also a druggist.

This was Mr. Bene. He was the opposite of Born. While one was short and round, the other was long and thin, beside Mr. Bene had some dark stinging eyes. When I saw him the very first time, my mind whispered; T. B. You understand now, why he lost his job as druggist. He took shelter with his friend and I was told, I could have him for a hired man.

Mr. Bene was a good hired man. In his spare time he was a cracking good cabinet maker. He built us a nice kitchen cabinet. Then Dr. Welsh wanted to open a drugstore in the next town, Mossbank. He offered the job as druggist to my man and of course he took it.

The first world war was on in its fury, and Mr. Bene's sympathies were on the German side, and he had not learned to keep his mouth shut, so it was only a short time and the people of Mossbank demanded another druggist.

Bene had to go back to the farm. One day he had to chase some fractious cows. He got all wet from sweat, then sat down in a drafty barn, milking, and caught a fearful cold. Now he really got T. B. Never have I seen a man go down that fast. First Mr. and Mrs. Born nursed him most tenderly, but finally he had to go to a Hospital. What really here happened, I

do not know or understand. Rumors got stronger and stronger, that the nurses in the Protestant Hospital made his life a nightmare. Mr. Born had to transfer him to a Catholic Hospital. Here he found a haven, where he could rest and die in peace. The nurses treated him with great love and consideration. They sure were sisters of mercy.

### *We Buy A Tractor*

In the first few years on the homestead we had very small crops, and that gave us a lot of concern. Later we had bigger crops, and that caused us trouble also. There were not threshing rigs enough in the country, and winter and snow came so quick, that some fields were covered with snow before the threshers could get there. These people had to wait till next spring to get their threshing done. The loss from damage always was great.

Now people began to buy tractors and threshing machines in great style. You could buy a \$5,000 outfit by giving a mortgage on your place. That made it easy, and soon trainloads of tractors came into western Canada.

One day my implement dealer said to me: "Bernard, why don't you let me sell you a nice little tractor?" I was nonplused. Never had I thought, that I should be the man to serve my community with a tractor and threshing machine.

I took the idea home and talked it over with the Missus. Than I got literature and began to study gas-engines. Then I went out to see what the people said, that owned such machines. One man was not home, so I went to see his neighbor, because I had a hunch he might be more willing to tell me if his neighbor had any troubles with his machine. But I never found a neighbor, that would speak in more glowing terms about the doing of the Rumely Oilpull than this neighbor did.

That decided it. We bought a 15/30 Rumely Oilpull. It was the smallest size the Company made and it was the wisest buy I could have made. Others bought bigger machines, but they were not economical or practical. Shubert did more with his machine than anybody else around. Perhaps it was because I took some good advice.

### *I Go To A Tractor School*

The Rumely people were very anxious, that their machines should do

good work, so they instituted short term schools in different cities in order to train men to handle their engines with success. Nobody had to convince me, that I knew a great deal less than nothing about gas-engines. When I received an invite to the next school, in Swift Current, I scraped up a few dollars and went.

The school lasted about 3 or 4 days. I could not afford to go to a hotel, so I sneaked into a Chinaman's restaurant, and when the bunks in his little backroom were filled I was willing to sleep on a table in the restaurant. There I got acquainted with a young man, sleeping in the backroom. His name was John Berg. He was a good steam engineer, but he felt that steam engines were on the way out, so he wanted to learn all about gas-engines. Believe me, we talked gas-engines for breakfast, dinner and supper.

For the fun of it I have just now looked in the tin box where I keep my valuable papers, and have dug up the certificate I received at that time from the Indiana School of Tractioneering, saying that I had received theoretical and practical instruction in the operation of stationary and traction gas engines. Dated March 31, 1913, over 31 yers ago. They were careful not to say, that I was now competent to operate any of these engines.

I certainly learned several things at that school, which helped me much to be successful forthwith. In the first place, it is true, I had learned what made the wheels go round, but I had also learned, that to be a good operator could not be learned in 3 or 4 days in a schoolroom. Further I had learned, that it might be good business to hire a competent man to run the outfit for me. Third, thru all my talks with John Berg I was convinced the right man had been handed to me again by the kind hand of Providence. Now it was up to me, to do my part and secure this man. Yes, before I left for home I had hired John Berg. My trip was most successful, not in learning, how to do it myself, but in getting a man that knew his business.

A little later I found out, that there was plenty of work left for me beside running the tractor. I had to go out and find jobs to break so much land for so much per acre. Then I had to buy oil and gas and bring it to the outfit. The plowshares had to be taken to the blacksmith for sharpening ever so often. When the outfit was laid up for repairs I had to hustle and worry for the repairs. I was on the go almost day and night, beside I had to look after my own place.

### *Plowing With The Tractor*

Well I remember our first job. It was 100 acres breaking of prairie sod for \$450. When the work was done than came the job of collecting, and that was something else again. Mr. McDowell promised to meet us in Expanse and pay us there, but he did not show up. The banker said, he was a bag of wind. The next time we were to meet in Expanse I took Mrs. Shubert along and sent her into the fire, and she did come back with the dough. I believe the banker let him have the money. Whether he got it back I didn't know or care, but those \$450 were a God-send to us.

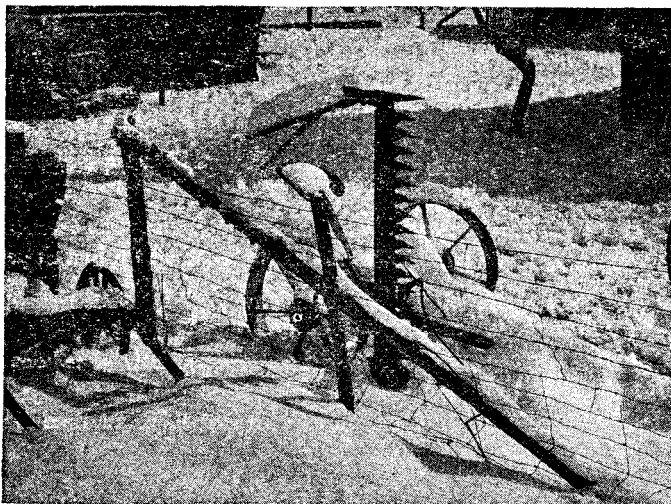
Other customers paid me in oxen, which I had to sell again, or they would pay with notes, which I turned in to the company to collect and apply on my outfit.

In the middle of the summer we had finished our jobs. Than we came home and broke up the rest of the prairie on our place. In fact, after a year we bought the 320 acre Hudson Bay land beside ours and put all of that under the plow.

### *We Build An Engine Shed*

In those days the people of western Canada used a very expensive roof over their farm machinery, tractors and threshers included. It was the big blue dome of heaven. When the work was done for the season they lined up all their machinery, that cost a king's ransom, very nicely into a corner of the yard. There it stood till next year. Now it is true, that western Canada has a very dry climate which is not so destructive as the weather is in New York, but just the same, wind and rain, frost and sunburn may be good for a living thing, but for a dead thing it is death and destruction. Therefore I could not get it over my conscience to expose a \$5000 outfit to the elements. At once I set a mason to work to lay a good foundation for a big engine shed. Whenever work was slack I put my men to work under the direction of Mr. Dennis to push the work along.

There was room in this shed first for the threshing machine. Than came other machinery and finally we lined up the tractor with a good-sized grinder. Once a week we did custom grinding. We chopped 100 lbs., oats for 10c.



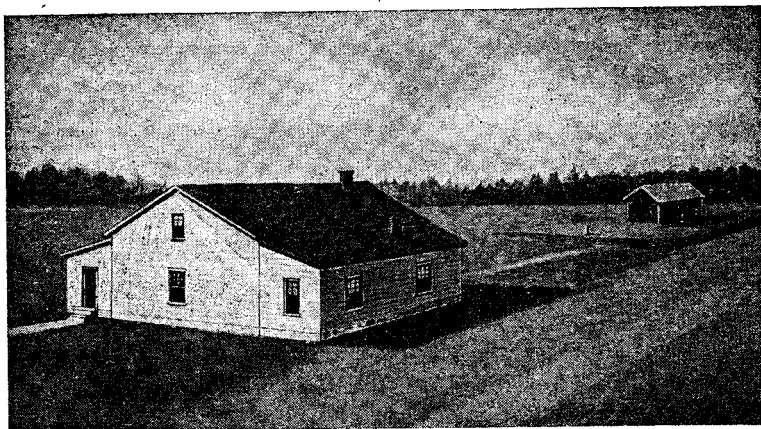
Machinery outdoors never appealed to me as good business,  
its wasteful, careless and sloppy

In the back of the shed we built a work-shop with blacksmith tools for repairs. Above the shop we built a room with bunks for eight men. Here we put in a stove and our hired men and our three boys had a comfortable place to stay.

#### *We Build A Cyclone Cellar*

During another slack time I got my help busy to dig a big hole in the ground. Our mason, John Slezewski, built a cave from rock, 10 by 14 feet inside. He put a concrete roof over it 6-8 inches thick. Over that we put 2-3 feet of dirt. Some steps led down to the cellar, and over these steps we even built a small house, to give our vegetables every possible protection during the severe winters. Here was also a safe place in the storms that might hit us at any time.

I have spoken about the concrete well we built and here was a concrete cellar, there was not another like it in the country.



THE OLD HOMESTEAD AND THE CYCLONE CELLAR

We found a small house on the place, 14 x 16 feet. The frame was covered only with 2 ply,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch lumber and paper between. Before winter set in we covered this with drop-siding and built a little entrance, 5 x 7, to protect the door. Later we built a lean-to, 10 x 16 on the North side. In the background is the cyclone or root cellar. You see the ventilator and the little house over the stairs for protection against the cold.

### *We Plant Trees*

There was another thing very few people had, that was trees. The Canadian government was most anxious to help the settlers to make their places homelike and protected. They advised us about trees and sent inspectors, to see if we had worked our land properly, so trees might have a chance to grow. Then they gave us little seedlings and cuttings of trees suitable for that climate.

For years we had not seen trees. We got terrible lonesome and hungry for the looks of a tree. With great loving kindness we prepared the soil, planted and cultivated the trees. Next year we planted more, and every year we planted more and more.

First we got Box-Elder, Willows, and Russian Poplar. Later we planted Spruce, Hemlock, Tamarack and Scotch Pine. These evergreens grew very fast. In a few years we had shelter belts around our buildings, and we had trees along two roads  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile long.

When we had our big engine shed painted I figured out a name for our farm that should be distinctive. This name I had painted on the front gable towards the road: 10,000 TREE FARM. To have 10,000 trees on a farm in New York means nothing, but in western Canada it was an accomplishment of no mean degree. By that time a few more cars were on the road, especially among the people in the villages. Farmers did not have any yet. Well, when the people in Expanse wanted to go somewhere on Sunday, they would say: "Let's go by Shubert's place and see the trees."



Left to right: Binder Shed, Chicken House, big Engine Shed, the House between Engine Shed and Horse Barn. Little house over Cyclone Cellar, Windmill on Well No. 2. and Pig-Pen.

About 15 years later our son Ludwig got possession of an old flivver. Now he made his dream come true, to see the old homestead again in Canada. He travelled 400-500 miles per day. Finally he arrived in Mossbank, 5 miles west of our old place. Here he rested up, had a shave and answered questions when people noticed his license. Then he was ready for the last 5 miles back to the old homestead. Here is part of his letter:



Mossbank, Sask., Canada  
Aug. 8, 1929

Dear Folks:—

then I saw the old School from afar. Then I saw Barnes' place. He got a little shack, which he shingled from the outside. There is an old tumbled-down barn.

Then I began looking for our old place. What would it look like? I broke over the last knoll—and there was the prettiest sight I had seen on the whole trip. The buildings could hardly be seen on account of the trees. The Pines along the road looked the best. It was a dark green wall against the dry, gray prairie. The paint on the buildings was still quite bright. Across the road stood Larsen's little house, painted white. It was all like a big picture of a dream, which I saw from the hill half a mile away.



When I broke over the last Knoll—there was the prettiest sight I had seen on the whole trip.

(Please notice the dirt road, the level prairie and the trees  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in the distance.)

As I came down the hill I thought I would stop in and see Larsen first. I turned in, went up to the door and knocked. He came out, looked at me but did not know me. But I knew him. He has not changed, only that he has become fat and has a nice big bay-window. I talked with him for quite some time, but he could hardly remember me.

Then at last I drove over to the old farm. I drove in and stopped, but there was nobody. Alex Morrison still owns the place. His son runs it. He comes out of Moose-Jaw in the spring and does the seeding. Then he comes out again in the fall to harvest it. The rest of the time he lives in town. He has no livestock on the farm. All work is done with tractors.

As I looked around I missed the sod-barn. It was all levelled off. A new house stood in the old one's place. The pig fence is gone. The two rows of trees behind the sod-barn are gone. The fence around the henhouse is gone. The pasture is sown to wheat. Its 3 inches high. The gardens are grown up to grass.

As I looked around, I saw the old hotbed was still there. The well-house, storm-cellar, engine-shed, horse-barn, tool-shed and the pig-house were still in good shape. The engine-shed and the horse-barn are not as big as I thought they were. The first thing I noticed was the name, "10,000 TREE FARM," is still on the engine-shed.

As I looked around and everything seemed so familiar and yet so strange I think I must have become homesick, for before I knew it my eyes were running over, and I felt all upset. That silence was unbearable. Not even a dog came out to greet me, and to think, the old place used to be so lively. Not a horse, not a hen, nothing alive in sight, no sound, only the moan of the wind in the trees: I could not stand to stay another minute. So I got into my car and drove to Ardill and Expanse — — —

With Love

Ludwig

I believe, anybody can understand, how I felt when I read that letter. After you have started a thing, and built it up step by step with much labor and sacrifice, you hate to see it go to pieces again. But now let's delve in the past again for a few more tractor experiences.

### *Threshing With The Tractor*

To run a threshing outfit of our size took about 10 men. How to board and house them, was the question I decided to build a bunk-car. It was 8 by 16 feet. It had upper and lower bunks and 12 men could sleep in it. A little stove made it comfortable, especially in cold and wet weather.

I made one mistake. I put it on a common wagon-gear. It had wide wheels but no wide trackage. When we started out on our first job of

threshing Mr. Pakula hooked the big team on and followed the road down into the big coulee. It was not very long when he came back and reported the caboose had tipped over when he came to a slanting road.

Before we set it up again we put a longer axle between the hind wheels and that did the trick. We had no more trouble. But one day the outfit was 5 miles away threshing at Bill Houston's, and I had to bring the bunkhouse over from home.. In order to have something to go back home with I tied my buggy behind.

When I arrived, they were awfull glad to see me, but they cried out loud and pointed to the buggy behind. It was almost a wreck. I had not secured the pole of the buggy in the right way. In going down hill the pole slipped ahead, got stuck in the ground and broke. The buggy got upset, but the chain held and dragged it along.

Certainly I felt terrible. I could not go home that night. Next morning, Bill Houston, who was a carpenter and handy man, fixed it up and the buggy did a lot of service yet, but after that I knew how to tie a buggy behind, I had learned the hard way again.

#### *More "Dinty Petersens"*

While I furnished the sleeping place for the crew, the people we threshed for furnished the meals. One day my men had worked on the other side of the big coulee. When they came home, they felt sick and utterly disgusted. When they turned in for supper, after a hard days work on that place, the lady of the house said to them: "I did not have time to wash the dishes, so you sit on the same place and use the same dishes, knives, and forks." No wonder they came home sick in soul and body. That was the only time in my life I ever saw such a thing happen. An old saying is: "Cleanliness is next to Righteousness."

As we had a big crop ourselves, we always had the threshers a good long time too, sometimes for a month. And furthermore, if bad weather should set in, nobody wanted to feed a crew that was not working. Then they just came home and Mrs. Shubert was elected to do some extra cooking. Here is how it went.

#### *Cooking For The Threshers For Just One Day*

The Missus got up at 4 a. m. to prepare a bounteous breakfast. Hard-

working men wanted no "light" breakfast in the morning. If you had dish-  
ed them up a slice of grapefruit, a piece of toast, and a cup of tea, they  
would have told you an "Earfull," believe me. Shyness was not their fault.

At 5 a. m. I went out to call the men. The teamsters went first to take  
care of their horses, while the Engineer and the Separatorman had their  
breakfast right away. Than they would hurry out to the field and get their  
machines ready for work. They filled up with oil and gas, filled the grease-  
cups, changed sieves or did repair work as necessary.

A little after 6 the men would begin to get into the field, loading on  
bundles and driving up to the machine. Soon you would hear the first ex-  
plosions of the gas-engine, and then the slow grumble of the thresher. You  
would see the straw flying out of the big pipe and you knew everything  
was alright. Our own boys were there with the grain wagon, to take the  
threshed grain to the granary or to the railroad.



A LITTLE AFTER 6 THE MEN WOULD GET INTO  
THE FIELD LOADING BUNDLES

About 9 a. m. the men were beginning to get hungry again, but the  
Missus knew it. She sent the girls in the field with the greatest can of hot  
coffee you have ever seen. Do you think, that was all? Better have another  
think. A basket, that it took two to handle, followed the coffee. Sand-  
wiches. Yes, they went like hotcakes.

At 12 noon nobody had to ring a bell for them. Funny, how they  
always knew, to a second, when it was dinnertime. Every man left his  
wagon where it stood at that moment. The drivers nimbly jumped onto  
their horses and hit it for home as fast as the horses could go.



THE DRIVERS JUMPED ON THEIR HORSES  
AND HIT IT FOR HOME

The table in our small 14 by 16 house was no little thing, but it was loaded to capacity. Potatoes, meat, gravey, vegetables, pickles, jam, jellies, pumpkin-preserve, pies, pudding, white and brown bread, hot rolls, and a big cake, coffee, tea, milk, and sugar. What more did you want? Do you think the Missus had a lot of help? Yes, she had; two hands, two eyes, and a clear head to think. These were her helpers, unless you figure, that a baby-in-arms was much help.

At 3 p. m. the big coffee pot made another trip to the field, and the sandwiches were not far behind. None of them came back home, feeling spurned. An army marches on its stomach, and the threshermen also.

At 6 p. m., or at dusk, we called it a day. About 1000 bushels of grain had been saved. The tired and hungry men came home, took care of their horses and did again honor to mother's cooking. After that the men went to their bunk-car, while the engineer and separatorman often worked for hours with some repair on their machines. Maybe one of the men had a mouth-organ, that was all the entertainment possible. The Radio was unheard of at that time. It would have been a wonderful thing on the lone-some prairie.



MAYBE ONE OF THE MEN HAD  
A MOUTH ORGAN

### *Hiring Threshermen*

Where to find the men to run a threshing-outfit, that was the all important question, that bothered us every year again and again and again. There were hundreds and thousands of threshing-rigs thruout the country, and every one needed men, that could not be found locally. Men were scarce anyway and the season was very short and uncertain. Every minute had to count in order to save the crop and make the outfit pay.

The government and the Board of Trade in Moose-Jaw helped us all they could. Also the employment agencies did their best. They issued a mighty call to the people in the East, to come and help us. Then excursion trains and harvest trains brought in the helpers.

One fall I went to Moose-Jaw to hire a crew. I went to the Board of Trade, and they put down my requirements. Then I went to the employment office, but I found no men.

When night came I entered the "Chink" restaurant across from the depot for my supper. I picked an empty table and sat down at the end, so I could overlook the whole place. Hardly had I sat down, when in trudged four or five men and sat down at my table. But the next moment they jumped up again and went into the kitchen, to get a wash.

As soon as they were back I tried to talk to them. They had just come in on the train from the East. They were Frenchmen from Quebeck. They wanted a job and I wanted men. We were brought together by a kind

providence. I hired them, and while they were short on experience with horses, they were willing workers and learned fast.

### *The Odd Man*

Once we did not have a full crew, so I went to Expanse, to see if the train would bring in a few men. It did, and I brought home the missing link.



### I GAVE EVERY MAN SOME WORK TO DO

For some reason, probably damp weather, we could not thresh the next day, so I gave every man some kind of other work to do. As they all went out of the yard to their task I felt sorry for this last man and offered him work also. I said: "We are going to plow out our potatoes today. You can go and pick them up, and I will pay you so much."

I thought, he would be glad, to do something, but imagine my surprise when he declared in a high huff, he "would not pick up potatoes for nobody." He was so insulted, that he left at once. Sure, there are all kinds of men in this world, but this was a special kind, and not a kindly one.

### *Another Odd Man*

Another time we were again shy a man in the gang. I dug up one in Moose-Jaw, but he wanted more money than I was paying. In order to make the work a little easier for the other men I promised him his price.

When I visited the crew the next day they were all extremely sore. The foreman declared the first thing I had to do, was to fire this man. "Well,"

I said, "I got him to make the work a little easier for all of you." "That does not matter," I was told, "we will keep this outfit going without him. He has told us you were going to pay him more than us. He has laughed at us and riled us, and now he must go, or we will go."

That was not all they demanded, now came the big stick: "In the second place," they told me, "you have to pay all the men the wages you promised him." That was a sour apple, but I had to take my medicine and like it. I learned another lesson the hard way. Threshermen are mighty independent, and a man better treat them nice or he will suffer. Well, this was the only time I had trouble with my crew. I always tried to treat them as well as anybody or a little better. I don't think I lost anything by shutting my eyes sometimes and my mouth also.

### *One Saturday Night*

We had finished threshing for my neighbor, Chris Larson. I walked home behind my team of horses. Just as I entered the yard a threatening storm broke out in all its fury. There by the sod-barn stood our bunk-car. I led my team behind this to seek shelter until the first blast of the storm had passed. Looking around I saw the big door of the engine-shed open, so I drove my team in there for better protection. I had hardly entered the shed when I looked behind and saw that a big gust of wind had blown over the bunk-car just on that very spot I had stood only a few seconds before. The hand of Providence had been kind to me again. I might have been killed or maimed, but had been graciously spared.

I have said quite a bit about my friends August and Julius, and I do not feel that I can close this story without another chapter or two about their fate.

### *A Very Close Call*

..

One year I tried Barley and had a fair crop. August wanted some of it for seed, so I sold him 10 bags. He had no other place to store it and piled the bags in his shack.

Now my friend had a bad habit, he started his fires with gasoline. It had always worked fine, but one day it got the best of him. He looked into the stove and thought that there was not a spark left, so in order to start a new fire, he poured in a swig of gasoline. In the next moment there



was an explosion which reached the can in his hands and tore the bottom out of it. He really was in hell.

Thru the explosion the bags of barley had been thrown against the door. This door opened on the inside, and now August was trapped. His hands were burned terribly, but he did not give up. He knocked out the window and crawled thru it. In order to save something he had grabbed his bedding with his teeth and dragged it out. What a man!

The shack and everything in it was lost. His hands were fearfully burned. For weeks he was utterly helpless. The old mother of Bill Houston was his nurse. She had to clothe and feed him like a little child. It was by the grace of God, that he received back the use of his hands.

### *A Second Call*

Hard luck called on August a year later in a different way. One Sunday evening he visited with us. We had supper together and talked of olden times. All at once he started to say something, then he broke off, and I heard him mutter: "No! No!" I looked at him, but I did not want to dig into him. If he did not feel like speaking, I was content to abide by his judgement. After awhile he went home and all was forgotten.



AUGUST LIT HIS PIPE AND WOULD NOT TALK

Next day I found out what was on his mind, when his hired man, Emil Pakula came over and told us, that the Mounted Police had taken August to Regina into jail.

Why? What for? August had killed three of his neighbor's horses, and anything that concerned horses was a mighty serious thing in Canada. It had happened this way. August had no water on his place, every bit of it he had to draw on a stoneboat from the Hudson-Bay slough, one mile

away. He even had to draw the water for his horses. Now he had started to dig a well. He worked inside, and his man, Emil, pulled up the dirt. When evening came he came up from his hard work. Looking around he saw a bunch of stray horses, which had drunk the water from his barrels and finally, as in mockery, tipped them over. This was winter, when most everybody let their horses run. They would paw the grass or stubble and eat snow for a drink, unless they could find some water somewhere.

When August realized, that all his water was gone, he was enraged. He got a small rifle from the house and started shooting, to scare the horses away, but he killed three. The neighbors soon found out what had happened. Then they got mad, reported it to the police, and August found himself in jail.

After I had grasped the facts I began to do a little thinking. What would happen to August. Maybe he might get 2 years in the pen. While he was away someone might cancel his homestead and when he came back everything would be lost. That must not be! I decided, to do everything in my power, to prevent such a thing.

### *I Get A Lawyer*

I went to Moose-jaw and saw the best lawyer in town: Knowles, Hare and Benson. After I had laid the matter before Mr. Benson, he said: "If I come to Expense to the trial, it will cost you \$100. But I can send you Mr. Johnson, a student, who will become a member of the firm, it will cost you only \$50." I agreed to Mr. Johnson and guaranteed the money.

When the day of trial came and the plaintiffs saw that we had a lawyer, they began to change their mind. They asked for a continuance for a week or ten days.

When that day arrived, they had cooled down considerably and had done a little hard thinking beside. What good would it do them if August went to jail? They were far more interested in getting their horses back. So they made us the proposition, that they would withdraw the charges, if August would give them a note for the value of the horses, and if I would sign these notes with him.

They were so anxious to smooth things over, that one of them killed a big turkey and gave the troopers a fine turkey dinner, to make them friend-

ly to their plan. When they approached me with their idea I chuckled to myself and agreed. Now everything was ready, the stage was all set.

### *The Trial*

The trial took place in the barber-shop of Pete Glasford, in Expanse. This was the tiniest shop I have ever seen. It was about 8 feet wide and 10 or 12 feet long. It was just big enough to shave one man and have one or two waiting. Now this shop was filled to overflowing. Possibly 50 or 60 men were there. We were packed in like sardines.



THE BANKER WAS THE MAGISTRATE

The Banker, Mr. Urquart, was the magistrate. He was the only man that had a seat. Before him lay impressively the big books of his court records.

When the Mountie had brought in the prisoner the charges were read. As the magistrate waited for the next move, the accusers spoke up and declared, they wanted to withdraw the charges if August would sign some notes and if Shubert would endorse them.

Three notes were presented, each one for \$300. Yes, horses were high in Canada. August put his name on them, then came my turn. It was one of the proudest moments of my life. That I could save my friend from the possible loss of everything he had, gave me great and deep satisfaction. After the notes were signed the prisoner was dismissed and the trial was over.

One incident ended that perfect day. After the trial we walked down

the street with August and a few of his neighbors. We came to the hotel. At the door to the bar, August said: "Come, have a drink." They went in, I went my way. I was willing to do anything for my friend, but nothing could make me drink for him. He knew it and I think everybody respected me for it.

Next fall August paid all those notes in full. It was the most expensive shooting he had ever done. It was another call of almighty God, to remember your creator.

### *A Third Call*

It happened after we had left Canada. August sold everything he had: 480 acres of land, machinery, horses, crops, everything. Then he built a good-sized flour-mill in Mossbank. In the only letter I ever got from him, his wife said: "..... our mill runs day and night, and we are making good."

Apparently success and prosperity were smiling at him. Everything looked very rosy, for a while.

The next news did not sound so good to me. August was calling for a meeting of all the farmers around, with the idea to make them shareholders in his venture. I sensed trouble.

Not long after that a third disaster struck my friend. It looked like a knockout. I never heard the full story about it, and I cannot fathom what really happened. The report was, the mill burned down and my friend lost everything. When our son, Ludwig, saw August in 1929 he found him on the farm again.

Some may call this hard luck. I call it the hand of God. Our father in heaven tries very hard to bring us to our senses, and make us realize, that eternal values are the only ones, that count in the end. What will it profit a man, if he would win the whole wide world, and lose his soul?

### *Julius*

Now a few words about Julius. The loneliness of the prairie and the difficulties and discouragements that constantly had to be met, were hard on the minds of men. I knew three of my neighbors, that got deranged for awhile. Julius was one of them.

One day August went past his place. He saw his horses grazing in the yard. It did not look right to him. He went into the little house Julius had built. There was nobody there. On the table lay some store-money from the main store in Expanse. Apparently Julius had left this behind, because it was no good in any other place. If anybody wanted credit at this store he had to give a note for say \$50 or \$100. Then the storekeeper gave him so much of this private money. With this money he would pay for what he bought. This eliminated all bookkeeping.

The next thing I heard about Julius was, that the police found him in the city, standing in the middle of the street, gazing at the moon and talking out of his head. He was taken in, examined, and when they found, that he once had been a German sailor, he was interned, as it was war time.

The man, that had the mortgage on his place, hunted him up in the camp. As he did not care to come back to his place, he signed it over to this man. Finally they took him to an internement camp in British Columbia, where he worked in the woods as a prisoner of war. That was the last I heard from him.

### *Mr. Hall*

One day I was building a fence near the big coulee, when a democrat came along with several people. It was the Hall family. Young Mr. Hall drove the horses, but his father, on the back seat, attracted my attention and sympathy. It seems, he did not have the strength to hold his head up and he talked without rhyme or reason. I had heard that the old man was out of his head, perhaps they had been to see a doctor.

After a few days Mr. Hall was allright again. I think the heat of the summer had affected him. It could not have been from loneliness, because this fine old gentleman had one of the biggest and finest families on the homestead.

### *Mr. Buss*

Then there was the case of Mr. Buss. He was a younger man, married, with a couple of small children. People that saw him at the depot, when he was taken away to the asylum, told me that he was reading to them from the Bible and tried to preach to them. I had never heard, that he was a religious man and could not account for this. After a couple of months in the asylum he came back cured.

These cases of men, temporarily deranged, have given me a lot to think. Someone has said, that almost everybody once or twice in his life has gone thru the borderland of insanity. In fact, some of our top-men have been declared insane afterwards. However that may be, it will make us feel less harsh and more forgiving against people, that seem to act abnormal.

### *The Great Sleeper*

We had another man in that country with a peculiarity never equalled to my knowledge. His home was several miles east, he had been hired by my neighbor, Mr. Larson, to break some land for him during the summer, when he was away.

One morning we did not see him working with his oxen. Towards noon the children sneaked over and peaked in the little window. They reported, that he was sleeping in great comfort. So we let him sleep. He did not turn out till the afternoon of the next day. He came out of the house and hollered to us: "What day is this?" Then he realized he had overslept a whole day.

On May 14 1911 this same man came to our house with the request to marry his daughter, Hannah, to a young man, Mr. Henry John Pederson. That was the first marriage I performed in Canada. Several years later they came again and I baptized several children for the young couple.

With this I have slipped into the chapter of marriage. I think, I will stay with it for a little while. Romance is the most interesting subject anywhere, and on the homestead it is even more so.

### *Wedding-Bells On The Homestead*

One Sunday afternoon during threshing-time I was resting in our bunk-wagon out in the country. The crew had taken my buggy or democrat and gone away somewhere. Only Mr. Gillis, my engineer, was with me. I heard a knock on the wagon, and there was the youngest son of our postmaster, Mr. Crosby. He wanted to see me, and I wondered, what was on his mind.

After a bit of stalling he came out with it. He wanted me to marry him the next day. I never refused to be of service to anybody and I sent him home happy.

The next day I left my threshing crew, went home and dug up my best

suit and drove 5 miles to Lake Johnston, where the girl and her parents lived in a little house, and married them. Young Evert was a shy fellow, but very honorable, and I believe his home was a happy one.

### *One False Step*

With our breaking-plow and tractor we had worked as far as 12 miles west. One day I greeted one of my former customers from that part of the country, at my house. I was soon aware that he had something heavy on his mind. Finally with great determination he unburdened his soul.

He confessed, that on one occasion he made a trip with his girl. In a town they stayed overnight in a hotel as man and wife. Now he said: "I have wronged the girl, I am sorry that I have done it, but now I want to make it right. I want to marry her, but I want to do it on the quiet. Will you come out tomorrow night and officiate?"

Nothing has touched me so much in a long time as this confession did. My estimation and respect for this young homesteader was greater than ever before. It was the manly thing to do.

I think, it took me two hours with my best buggy team to make that long trip. I got there after dark. After awhile the bride and her parents appeared. After I united them we had a very simple supper. They started housekeeping and I believe their wedded life was a happy one.

### *Marriages, That Failed*

About 75% or more of the homesteaders were batchelors. Women were scarce in the west. Man had to go east to find a helpmate, or even over the ocean, like

### *Ole Olson*

He was a young Swede and went back to Sweden to find the girl he could make queen in his shack. We all liked him and wished him well. Of course, when he came back, we were all on tiptoe to hear, how he made out. I especially, wondered in my mind, if he had told her the truth of what was ahead of her, or if he had painted a "Fata-Morgana" for her.

Apparently he had told her the truth, for she did not marry him in

Sweden, but came along to look before she leaped. After she had taken a good look she said: "No!" she hired out instead as maid to Dr. Welsh and later drifted to the big city.



OLE MARRIED A GIRL FROM THE HOMESTEAD

Maybe Ole was better off without her. Then he married a simple girl from a neighboring homestead and was happy with her. The bright star from afar was not the right stuff for the homestead.

*Bill Houston*

This man went away east and brought home a motherly looking girl, with a kind disposition, but short on independence.

One Sunday afternoon Mr. Pakula, my hired man, called on his wife, who worked in that neighborhood. Then he also dropped in at Bill Houston's place, to get acquainted with the new bride, especially as they were both Germans.

The young wife was pleased to find somebody she could talk to in the new and strange country, so she set the table for a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. All at once she saw her husband drive into the yard, and she cleaned off the table in a jiffy. By the time Bill had put his team in the barn and came into the house, all signs of the impending Kaffee-Klatsh had vanished.

When Pakula told me this I did not know what to think. Apparently she was afraid of her husband, or at least did not trust him fully, and lacked independence of action.

This did not bode for good, and I am sorry to report, that this mar-



riage failed. After a little while she left and went back home to Mama. Probably she had never been out in the world before and did not know how to stand up for herself.

### *Joe Niessman*

Joe was another neighbor and lived a few miles to the east. He had 320 acres like the rest of us. He was a good-natured, likeable chap and had the good-will of everybody. But he was poor and did not seem to get ahead much.

They always say, that a married man with a family has it lots harder than a bachelor, that has only got himself to look after. In spite of that I have always found, that it was the married man that made a success of himself and got ahead. There is a blessing in marriage somewhere. The single man seems to be handicapped, even if it costs him less to live.

Well, one fine day Joe got married. Shortly afterwards I had a little business with him and called on him. That was the only time I ever was in his house. Yes, it was small. There were two tiny rooms in it. And furniture, I believe that was the barest place I ever saw in my life. A table and a couple of chairs was just about all I saw.

Yet the yung couple was giggling, laughing and happy. Joe was anyway a happy-go-lucky fellow, and his bride seemed to take life the same way. I figured, that if she was made out of the right stuff, there was no reason, why they should not be happy and successfull. But I am sorry to report, that this marriage also did not take. After a little while she went back to the bright lights of the big city.

The tragedy of all these failures was, that it was almost impossible to get a divorce in Canada. Every divorce had to be granted by Parliament and cost a mint of money. At that time there were less than 50 divorces a year granted in Canada.

What did that mean? It meant simply, that any of these people, that could not live together could never marry again legally. "Wild Marriage" was all, what was ahead of them, and that is very bad indeed all around. I have always frowned on divorce, it is terribly overdone here in the States, but wild marriages are worse yet.

## III

### *May Bell*

One of the men, that settled on a homestead with me at the beginning, was old Mr. Bell. He came from Missouri and was a sick man. He expected to benefit by the change of climate, but he was the first man to die amongst us old-timers.

He had two sons, Dyson and Enoch, who also took up land. Then he brought a fellow along by the name of McDougal. This young man hurriedly built a sod shack and then married May, the only daughter of Mr. Bell. Those were the first wedding bells on the prairie.

But McDougal did not stay there very long. He acted funny. Soon the Mounted Police investigated him and it came out, that he had been an inmate of an asylum in Missouri. He was sent back to the States and that ended that marriage. May did not go back with him, but took over his claim and got the land in her name.

Several years later another young man drifted into that neighborhood. He worked out. It seems May hired him and he worked for her. Then the rumor got going, that they were living like married people together. Next thing I heard, May had gone to the States. Here she lived until she could get a divorce from McDougal.

When May came back to Canada Bill Sentence met her at the border in Portal. Here they were married and lived happy ever after. I had one meal in their house, and it seemed to me a very happy place. May was quite homely, Bill was no Adonis, but their hearts were in the right place. That is what counts in the long run. God bless May and Bill!

### *August Goes A-Marrying*

Mr. Buss, of whom I spoke before, was a painter. In the spring and summer he put in his time on the homestead, and did also a lot of painting. He did a fine job on our big engine-shed. He painted the name on it, 10,000 TREE FARM, and it looked grand. When winter set in he liked to go back to Winnipeg. It seems he had helped a few to find a wife in the big city. August had heard of it and so he asked him, if he could find one for him too. "Sure he said I will be glad to help you. I will let you know, when to come to Winnipeg."



ENTRANCE TO THE HOMESTEAD

Mr. Buss painted "10,000 Tree Farm" on the Engine Shed

To the left is the horse-barn, in the middle is the shed which held two binders. The home was to the right from the Engine-Shed. (not visible)

When the fateful message had arrived August took a few loads of wheat to the elevator for ready cash. Then he got a couple of friends to take care of his livestock, said "Good-bye," and went a-marrying.

When he came to Winnipeg Mr. Buss took him in hand. They went to a show and August got an introduction to an usher girl. He had a date with her, but it was "No Sale."

Next he was taken to a restaurant and shown a girl waiting on the table. August took her to a show, and when he mentioned marriage, he was taken up. They went to a minister and got married.

Now the young bride wanted to present her new hubby to her folks. These lived in the bush in hard circumstances. When they got there, she said to him: "I will go inside and prepare them for the surprise."

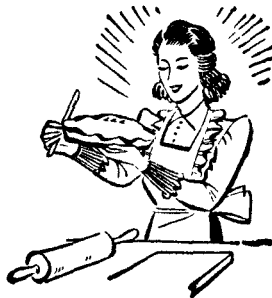
She went in and said to her folks: "I got married and now I am on my honeymoon." The father answered quite unsurprised: "Well, if you are married, then you are married. It's alright." Then she went out and brought in her new husband, and he found favor all around.



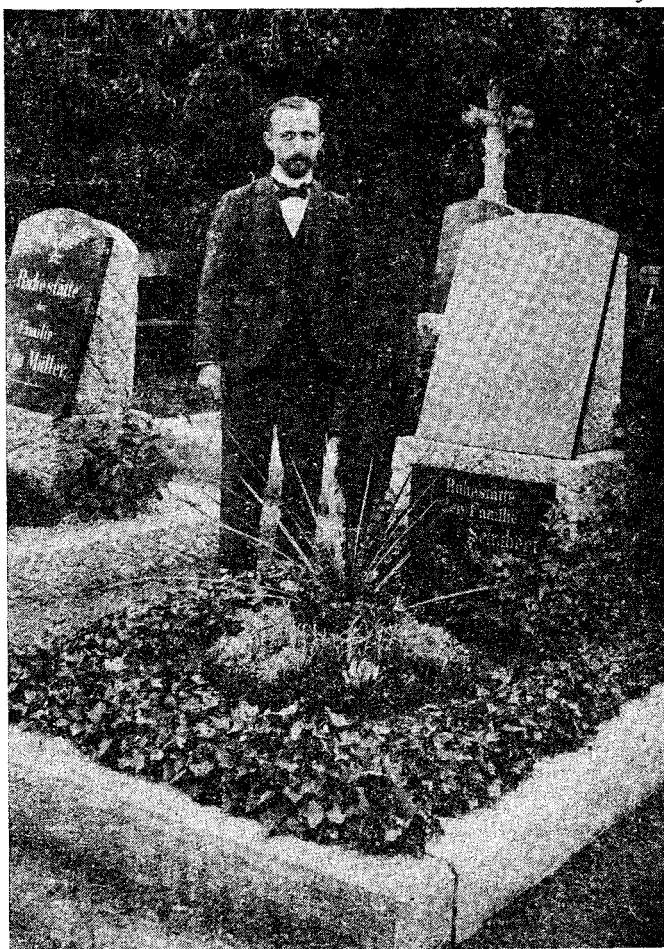
AND THEY WERE MARRIED

As I have intimated, the whole relationship was very poor. To make a farm out of a bush is a very slow and heartbreaking job. When August turned up with a farm of 320 acres and no stumps, but every acre ready for the plow, he looked very desirable and prosperous. When the next threshing-season came around the father and the brother of the bride came out to help us and earn a little much needed cash. Later a sister came out and was soon courted and married to Ben, one of the Fenske boys. By and by the whole family followed. Farms were found for them and they did well, as they were good workers.

When August came home a happy husband we gave him and her a warm welcome. The young bride accustomed herself to the new circumstances. She was willing to learn and one day she invented a new pie, a "Bean-Pie." She offered it to the threshing crew and they joked about it



SHE INVENTED A "BEAN" PIE



THE HOMESTEADER

26 years old, 45 years ago, at the grave of his mother who died a year before, Feb. 1, 1898, at Bremen, Germany.

for a long time. Here was a quick marriage ,that turned out well ,and this ends the marriage chapter.

The next chapter I want to devote to my dear father.

### *My Father's Visit*

Hardly had I ever expected to see my father again, for Germany was 4500 miles away. My mother had died more than 15 years ago when my father married again. His new wife liked to travel, so she induced him to go and see "Bernard" in Canada.

Sometime in May 1914, just before the big war started, my father and mother arrived in Moose-Jaw. I had told them to stop at the "American Hotel," and that is where I found them. I had not come to Moose-Jaw with horse and wagon, but for the first time in my life had come with an auto. This I had hired in order to get some quick repairs for our tractor, which was laid up.

The trip back was a corker. My folks had the back seat, I had the front seat with the driver. It was an open car. Out of the corner of my eyes I watched my people and felt sorry for them, when I saw them bouncing up and down and holding on for dear life. They sure thought they were going into the wilderness of western Canada. Well, we had no auto-roads at that time, in fact, this was no road yet, it was only a rough and winding trail.

Perhaps my father was not too much surprised, for since he landed in the new world he had seen things ,that surprised, amazed and enraged him down to the bottom of his heart. He had made the mistake of taking his ticket thru New York instead of landing in Halifax, Canada. Now he had to go thru the hell of Ellis Island. With burning cheeks and fire in his eyes he told me, how he, the 68 year old VISITOR had to strip off every stitch of clothing to appear before the czars of Ellis Island. Never in his whole life had such a disgrace and humiliation been forced upon him. No Wonder Ellis Island is known as the Island of tears.

### *My Father Makes Himself Useful*

My father had always been an active man, and while he was a businessman of the city the love of the open country was great in him. I remember

only too well, how a little ad one day wrought a big change in our life and in the end brought us out on the homestead many years later.



THE HOMESTEADER TOOK THIS PICTURE OF HIS FATHER IN HIS TIN SHOP JUST BEFORE HE LEFT FOR AMERICA

Here he worked himself from his 14-19 year. On the stove he made every morning the coffee for the breakfast, and on Mondays, when "Mom" was washing, he prepared the dinner—milk—rice—soup and fried potatoes. When 19 years old he was given an appointment as assistant pastor for 3 years. Then 3 years college, and 4 years as regular minister. Transfer to America. Seven years minister in Minnesota and Kansas. Finally the Homestead

Mr. Sostén, who owned considerable acreage just on the outside of Bremen, had decided to retire from vegetable raising. He laid his land out in parcels and offered to rent it for \$2.50 each. Father asked us, what we

thought about it. We were all for it. So he went out to get ahold of some land. When he came back, he told us, that he had rented lot No. 10 and 11. We were overjoyed. A new venture loomed ahead.

Next my father hired an old carpenter, that was out of work, Mr. Shutte, to build a garden-house in our workshop. Every piece was numbered and laid away. When spring came we loaded it on our handwagon and carted it out to our new garden.

After it was all set up we dug a well and put a pump on it. We got water in 6-8 feet. Then we built a fence around it for protection. Day by day we dug with our spades, we harrowed and planted, we weeded on our knees, and one day we brought home in triumph the first fruits of our toil and soil. It was a greens like rape, which we cut when it was one to two inches high. In time we had everything in vegetables and fruit you might think of. Here is where I got my first lesson in farming.

One day father came home and, making himself very important, he told, how busy he had been today. He said: "Somebody gave me a tip, and now I cut off all the leaves and vines from our potatoes. Now all the strength will go into the potatoes and they will be so much bigger." Poor Pa, he had ruined the potatoes. No leaves, no potatoes!

When the old gentleman came to Canada, he wanted to do something, but hard work was out of the question. So I supplied him with a lot of gopher traps and he became a great trapper. He made several rounds a day and kept book on every gopher accounted for. How many? Over 500. That was good work, and now I must say a few words about

### *The Canadian Gopher*

Before I came to Western Canada I had only seen a few gophers in western Kansas. One day I shot one with my rifle, and that was the best shot I ever did. I have never been a hunter or a fisherman. If I wanted some recreation I would sit down in a comfortable chair and do some reading, but to tramp thru the woods, carry a heavy gun and get all tired out never appealed to me. Good thing, that we are not all alike.

Western Canada was full of gophers. They could live where nothing else could live. Grass and grassseed was like bread and cake to them. Grass was everywhere, even if it was thin and sparse.





I WOULD SIT DOWN IN A COMFORTABLE CHAIR  
AND DO SOME READING

When the settlers came, and the plow got busy and crops began to grow, that meant golden prosperity for Mr. and Mrs. Gopher. They did not like the plowed fields to much, they rather dig their holes in the grassy sod on the roads, in the pastures or along the fields. From here they started their forages into the fields nearby.

The gophers would reach up on a stock of grain, cut it partway thru, like felling a tree. When it was down they would suck the juices or feast on the grain. Then they would go to the next and the next and the next, until a whole strip along the field was destroyed. I often lost from 5-10 acres of grain, and when you multiply that by every settler you can see that the loss was enormous.

Something had to be done about it, but what? First we got some help from their natural enemies. There was the badger, an animal a little larger than our woodchuck. They had powerfull paws, with which to dig out Mr. Gopher, but these big holes and piles of dirt made a mess in the field and we did not like them. Then there was Mr. Weasel. He was thinner than the gopher and could easily hunt him in his holes and runs. Sometimes my father got a weasel in his traps, but under my orders he released every weasel that was not badly hurt by the trap. It is true the weasel has a bad name in connection with the chicken-coop, but they never bothered me, they had more gophers than they needed.

When we organized a town-board the gopher problem came before us

the very first thing. Concerted action was needed. If one man fought the gophers and his neighbors did nothing, his efforts were in vain. So it was decided to furnish every settler a bottle of poison. He would mix this with a pot of grain and then lay out a few kernels of the grain near the gopher holes. It helped some, but there were always plenty of gophers left. The damage every year was heavy. We got kind of resigned to the evil, and took it as something, that had to be borne. Certainly, we rejoiced, when somebody like my father made it a steady business all summer long to go on the war-path against Mr. Gopher and all his family.

At least, one thing we did not have, that was rats. Maybe they have them by this time..

*November 24, 1914*

My father had intended to return to Germany early in the fall, but when the terrible war started his plans failed. He suffered for nothing with us, so he decided to stay and wait till the war was over. We all expected it would last only a few months.

My father had always enjoyed good health, but several times I had noticed, that he would leave the table, go into the next room and make some exercises with his arms. His heart was bothering him, and this would give him relief.

On Nov. 24, 1914 he wanted to go with me to Expanse, but when I had to write a letter first, he came to the door and said: "I will go ahead, and when you catch up with me you can pick me up." He had always loved to walk and took every chance to do so. Mr. Barnes caught up with him and gave him a ride to town, so he was there before me.

When I came to the post office, in Expanse, somebody told me that my father had been taken sick and was in the shack of our druggist with Mr. Bene.

At once I went over there and found my father on the couch. He told me that Mr. Bene had treated him to coffee and cake, when he felt a pain in his arm and had laid down to rest. While he yet talked another spell of pain came over him. I held his hand to give him comfort. Drops of sweat came onto his forehead and he seemed to be in extreme pain.

Br. Bene rushed out to get Dr. Welsh. He came very quickly, and what I had not seen he saw at once. He closed the eyes of my father, then I knew, that he had passed on into the great land of eternity.

I felt the great loss very deeply, but I was thankful that I had had a chance to find him yet alive and speak a few words with him. He was the first and only man I have ever seen die.

At once I made arrangements for burial. It was dark before I got home. They knew nothing. There were no phones. Mother was waiting anxiously. She came to the wagon and said: "Where is father?" When I told her, he would come no more, she would not believe it. She looked into the wagon, to see, if he had hidden himself, but it was no joke, I had spoken the truth.

After a few days we went to Expanse for the funeral. The undertaker had a tiny funeral parlor, that held hardly 20 people. The young minister did his best to comfort us, he even sang a German hymn. A few flowers graced the coffin. We put it on a democrat and a few buggies followed. It was a little over a mile to the cemetery, and there we laid him to rest till the great Easter-Morn ,when death shall be no more.

When we came back to Expanse kind-hearted Mrs. Trimble, who ran the bakery, invited us in for a cup of hot coffee and some cookies. If the cup of cold water is not forgotten, neither shall this cup of hot coffee.

About a year ago, in 1931, Mr. Barnes sent me notice of Mrs. Trimble's departure. Like a flash all these things came back to me. Kindliness and love will never be forgotten, they are the fruits of a new and better life.

### *Mother Goes Home*

After father was gone mother was invited by the Fenskes to live with them, as they had more room than we had. When Spring came she decided to go back home to Germany. She took a steamer to Holland and went by rail from there. She would have done better to stay in Canada, for hunger was king in Germany. Afraid of worse times to come she hoarded and hungered today in order to have something for tomorrow. At last her little strength gave out and she exchanged the world of war for a world of peace.

In course of time we received an account of our inheritance. Before the war it would have been a number of thousand dollars, now it had shrunk

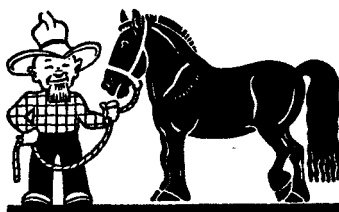
to a few pennies, not worth sending. The war has cost us dearly. In the end it makes everybody poor, even the victors.

### *The Expanse Fair*

Now let's look for a minute at the bright side of things again.

After so many years finally an agricultural society had been organized in Expanse. The natural thing was, that this should culminate in a fair. It was a great day. Everybody tried to show, what he had learned and accomplished in the years of homesteading. It was a joyfull climax of our own personal life in Canada, which soon should come to a close.

Prizes were offered for almost everything ,and we took full advantage of every chance possible. We exhibited buggy-horses, draft-horses and colts. We had even some swine there. When it came to vegetables, we were in the running, yes Sir!

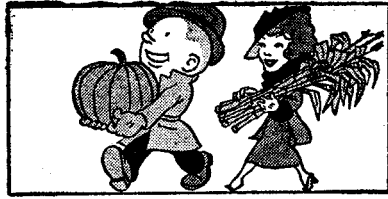


WE EXHIBITED DRAFT HORSES

One prize was offered for the best picture or painting made by a homesteader. When I saw that I dug up the painted drawings I had done in my school-days. That was 25 years ago, but it was my work, why should I hide my light under a bushel?

Mr. Bene was quite an artist. He helped to show these pictures really to advantage. He got some colored crepe paper in strips 4-6 feet long. He hung these on the walls here and there. Then he pasted my paintings on these strips. It not only helped the pictures, but made the large schoolroom look brighter and better.

Yes, we got the prize, indeed we got prizes everywhere. We got over \$50 in cash and some prizes in goods, given by the merchants, for instance a wonderful sheep-lined coat.



WE TOOK VEGETABLES TO THE FAIR

The prize of all prizes was offered for the best collection of vegetables and fruits. Mrs. Crosby beat us in that, because she had a nice lot of canned vegetables there. When she found out, that she was first and the Shuberts were second, she felt cheated and disappointed, because the first prize consisted of an agricultural machine, like a cultivator. The second prize was a wonderful set of imported English dishes. She suggested, that I might trade prizes with her, but I thought Mrs. Shubert would not like it, so I had to disappoint her.

This fair was a great day in our life. It has reminded me very much of the day last summer, in 1932, when the Farm Bureau picked 4 or 5 places in the county to show to the people as an example of accomplishment of the farmer's business. Our place was one of the picked ones. When over 115 cars with 500 people stopped here and gave us the "once-over," I felt immensely happy and satisfied. Our work was recognized, we had not lived and worked in vain. We have never pushed ourselves into the front-lines, we have much rather stayed out of sight, we always had plenty of business to do at home and there we have found the satisfaction that has made us happy and contented. If in spite of that our work has been of benefit and encouragement to others, then we are only human enough to feel pleased and glad over it.

#### *We Sell The Homestead. — Why?*

When we went to western Canada we had our eyes open to one or two things. First, we believed the soil was virgin soil and excellent. Somebody said, it was 14 feet deep, apparently inexhaustible. In the second place, I had no doubt, that the climate was rough and cold, but I saw a lot of people, that did not mind it. I was in the prime of life, about 35, so I thought I could take it also.



MR. AND MRS. HOMESTEADER  
just starting out together 45 years ago.

Yet one thing I had estimated wrong. I understood in a hazy way, that this was a dry country, with very little rain. We came from Central Kansas, which also had the name of a dry country, yet we had fairly good crops there, so I lulled myself into the hope, that Canada could not be worse.

It did not take very long for me to find out how dry dry could be. In ten years we only had one really good crop. In some years we had two inches of rain all summer. We had worked our land, we had put in our seed. After awhile it came up, perhaps a late frost cut it down. It made another feeble effort to grow, but there it stood. No rain, no growth! Every morning, noon and night we looked at the sky, at the clouds and the wind—but no rain! Week by week went by, no rain! A month had passed, we said: "A good rain might save us yet." Two months had gone, the crops were about three inches high, a few kernels of seed would form, no binder could reach it, only a mower, and half of it would even then be lost. We would not get our seed back. Then the government stepped in and loaned us seed, but they put a first lien against our land, even ahead of

any mortgage that might be on the books already. We just sunk that much deeper in debt.

Other years we had a fair crop coming along, when a couple of weeks before harvest rust would strike the crop. It struck the stem, it prevented the sap from getting into the grain. The grain could not fill out. It shrunk and shrivelled. We had a 25 or 30% crop instead of a 80-100% crop.



MR. AND MRS. HOMESTEADER  
today, after a full and rich life.

Again it would happen a week before harvest that at noontime a big storm and hail would sweep the country, and dash all our hopes to nothing. It's true, I had paid near \$300 for hail-insurance, but when the adjusters were thru with their figuring, I got just enough out of it to pay for the insurance. We ourselves always were the losers, we had to take the rap, we had to tighten our belts a little tighter and hope for another year.

If we had been out of debt it would have been bad enough, but when all our notes and debts came due every November the first, then it was heartbreaking. Again and again I made trips to Weyburn and Regina, to plead for more time in the Head-Office of the International, the Massey-Harris and the Rumely Co. In the worst years the Government declared a Moratorium, but if there was just a ghost of a crop, then these companies sent the sherriffs going over the country day and night. They piled costs upon costs, and every one tried to get the first bite on us, get his. Get it all and let the devil take the hindmost.

Finally I got weary of fighting and dodging, hoping and trusting, I decided, it was better, that I myself should sell the homestead then to let some company sell it over my head. This was in war-time, 1917. Farmland was booming, and probably I could not have picked a better time to sell. Yes, I think, the invisible hand, that had guided me so often, again took me by my hand and led me out of a bad place.

There was one more reason, why this was a good time to change the course of our life. The family. Our children were growing up, and soon would settle down for life. Now if ever was the time to bring them into a country, where we could all live together and enjoy life.

After I had made up my mind to sell out I took the next train to Moose-Jaw and listed the place with three real-estate men.

When I took the train home I had a buyer. It was the conductor of the train, Mr. Morrison. He coaxed me into the baggage-car and had a talk with me about the sale of the farm. On my next trip to Moose-Jaw he took me into the office of his real-estate agent and there we signed the papers. (This agent was one of the three I had listed the farm with. He immediately had put Mr. Morrison on my trail, and he found me on the train going home.)

The price of the farm was \$11,000, and included some machinery. Yet



there was a lot of machinery, that was not included, there were a lot of odds and ends, there were over 20 horses, 10 cows and other livestock, beside the furniture, and all had to be disposed of. So we set a day for a big auction-sale.

### *We Have An Auction*

Mrs. Shubert started to bake bread for that sale a week ahead. Every day a baking. The loaves were put in the cellar, where they kept fine. I do not know, how much bologna and cheese we bought, but it was enough for a free feast for everybody and his wife. It was March 12, 1918, and it was a very sharp and raw day. At 12 noon the hot coffee-pot started its last round, and was never more welcome than on that cold day.



THE AUCTIONEER STARTED THE SALE AT 1 P. M.

Mr. Sheperdson, the littl auctioneer, with the big voice, started the sale at 1 p. m. He knew his business. In nearly three hours he had the sale finished. He sold \$5,480 worth of stuff. There were over 20 horses and more than 10 cows. I never saw such bidding on cows. Hardly had a cow come out of the sod-barn when a bid of \$100 greeted her. At that time people were just crazy to buy cows. Cows gave an income, while the horses were eating their heads off with oats up to \$1 per bushel. Yet several of our teams brought \$530 each. Some potatoes were sold in bushel lots for \$3 per bushel.

When Mr. Sheperdson started the sale he told a little story on me, that made me blush. He said: "One day we wanted to bury a little boy and we asked Mr. Shubert to meet us at the cemetery and say a few words of prayer. It was a very cold and raw day, but Mr. Shubert was there waiting for us when we arrived. Mr. Shubert has always done the best for us gladly, and now let us do the best for hm." Well, I had forgotten all about that little incident. I certainly never expected to hear about it again



THIS IS THE HOMESTEADER, AS IS, 30 YEARS AGO

Sure, this is not a flattering picture, it's rather grim reality. The clothing looks durable and fit for a rough climate. His beard has grown out for protection in storm and ice. His face has the steady look of strong determination. His character and willpower had to absorb a lot of sheer iron and steel, not to falter, bend, or break, but to triumph over everything.

This man had to stand on his own feet and do his own thinking.

What the homestead did for him the present war will do for our young men today. They will come back to us as veterans of hardship and will be the pioneers of the future. They will be the ancestors of a sturdy race, which will own the tomorrow.

or get any credit for it. I was only too glad to be of help or service anywhere. Yet this little thing was not forgotten.

### *Was Our Homesteading A Success Or Failure?*

Somebody with a head for figures may have put two and two together and be ready to declare, Mr. Shubert did not do so bad after all. He went to Canada with nothing and came out after ten years with a sale of farm and goods for over \$16,000. Well, that would make a nice ending to this story, but it would not be the truth. Rock-bottom of the truth is, that we never saw a red cent of the \$11,000 for the sale of the farm. Every cent went for mortgages and notes.

All we had left was the \$5,480 from the auction-sale. That was our reward for ten years of work and worry, suffering and hardship of the most intensive kind. And we probably would not have had any of this, if we had let things drift until our creditors would have sold the place over our head. I shiver to think what our fate would have been then. At that time I did not realize it, but today, 27 years later, I can clearly see how the good hand of our father in heaven led us with a strong hand the way He thought best.

It may be of interest also to put on record, that the bank in Canada, that cashed our sale-notes, charged 10% for this favor. That's how the banks made money. Then the auctioneer called for 5%, and the railroads got near \$500 till they had finally delivered us here in Delaware County, N. Y. All this cut our final returns considerable.

### *Going Home*

It was March 27, 1918, about two weeks after the big sale, when we said "Good-bye" to Canada and went back to the United States. Our

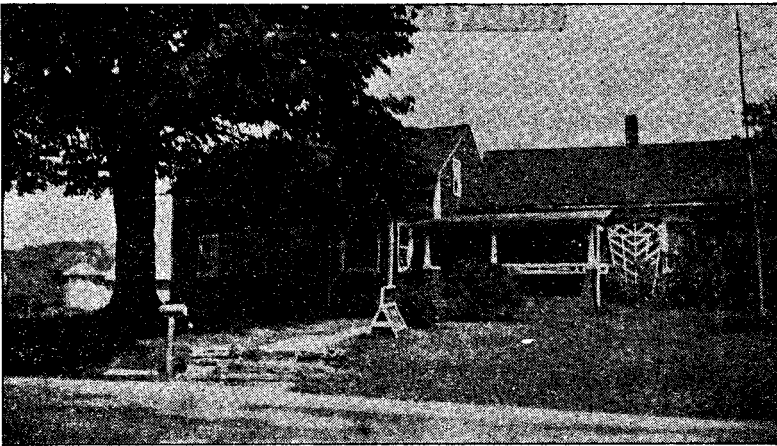


family was unbroken, 10 children. When we passed thru Chicago a Parmelee bus took us to another depot. As the bus driver opened the door, he counted us in and exclaimed: "six, seven, eight, nine, ten, yes, ten child-

ren, the PERFECT Family." We hunted quite a bit for a new home, and finally found it here near Franklin, Delaware County, New York.

When we went to Canada we hoped to find or build a home of our own. We did find a place to live, but it hardly was a home. It was only a temporary shack. A permanent home with the conveniences that civilized people expect in a moderate way, we have only found here in New York. But is this really permanent? As the years roll by I cannot help but feel very much, that the nice home we enjoy now, is only temporary also.

A real and permanent home we will find only among the many mansions in our father's house. When we arrive there, we will say: "AT HOME AT LAST."



HOME OF THE SHUBERT POULTRY FARM

# OUR PRICE LIST

January 1, 1945

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## White Leghorn Chicks—

270 to 345 Egg Pedigreed Sires

1. From Mature Hens ..... 16c
2. From Pedigreed Hens  
Records from 260 to 345 Eggs ..... 50c - \$1
3. Sexed Pullets from Regular Pens ..... 34c
4. Sexed Cockerels for Broilers ..... 3 - 5c

## New Hampshire Chicks

1. Straight run ..... 16c
2. Sexed Pullets ..... 24c
3. Sexed Cockerels ..... 12c
4. Rock Red Crosses ..... 16c

These are the prices delivered at our farm. 50c extra per 100 by MAIL.

We guarantee 92 per cent accuracy on Sexed Pullets. Orders for cockerel chicks filled only according to supply on hand.

Prices may change without notice.

**BERNARD SHUBERT**

**Franklin, N. Y.**

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